

伝説の勇者の伝説 11

君子豹変の王様

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富士見ファンタジア文庫

イラスト とよた瑣織

「……まるで」

と、ライナは小さく呟いた。

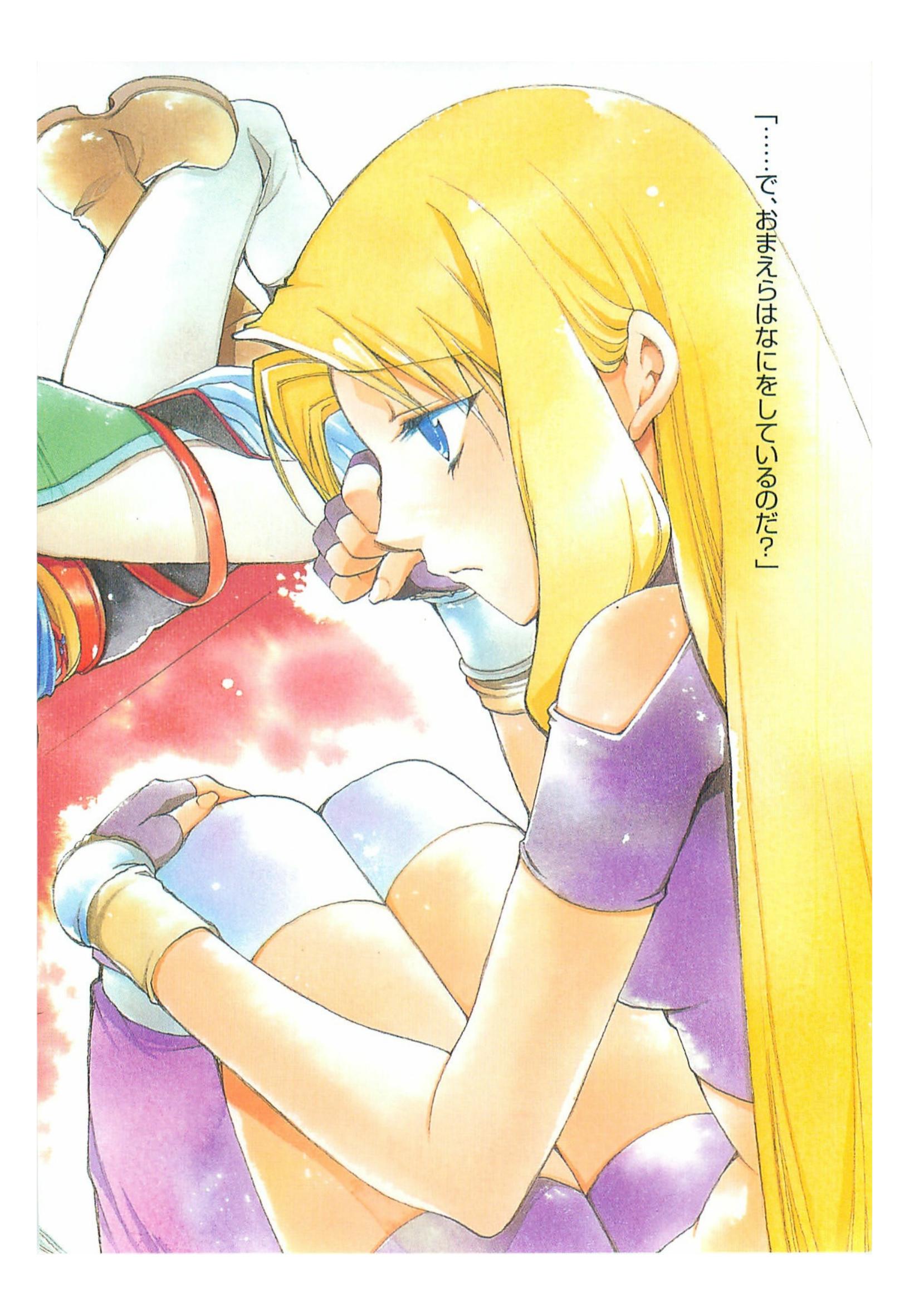
「……まるでここにあるのは、絵空事だ」



伝説の勇者の伝説 11

君子豹変の王様





「……で、おまえはなにをしつこねのだ？」

「……殺せ」

シオンは、自分に命じる。
ナイフを持つ手に、力を込める。

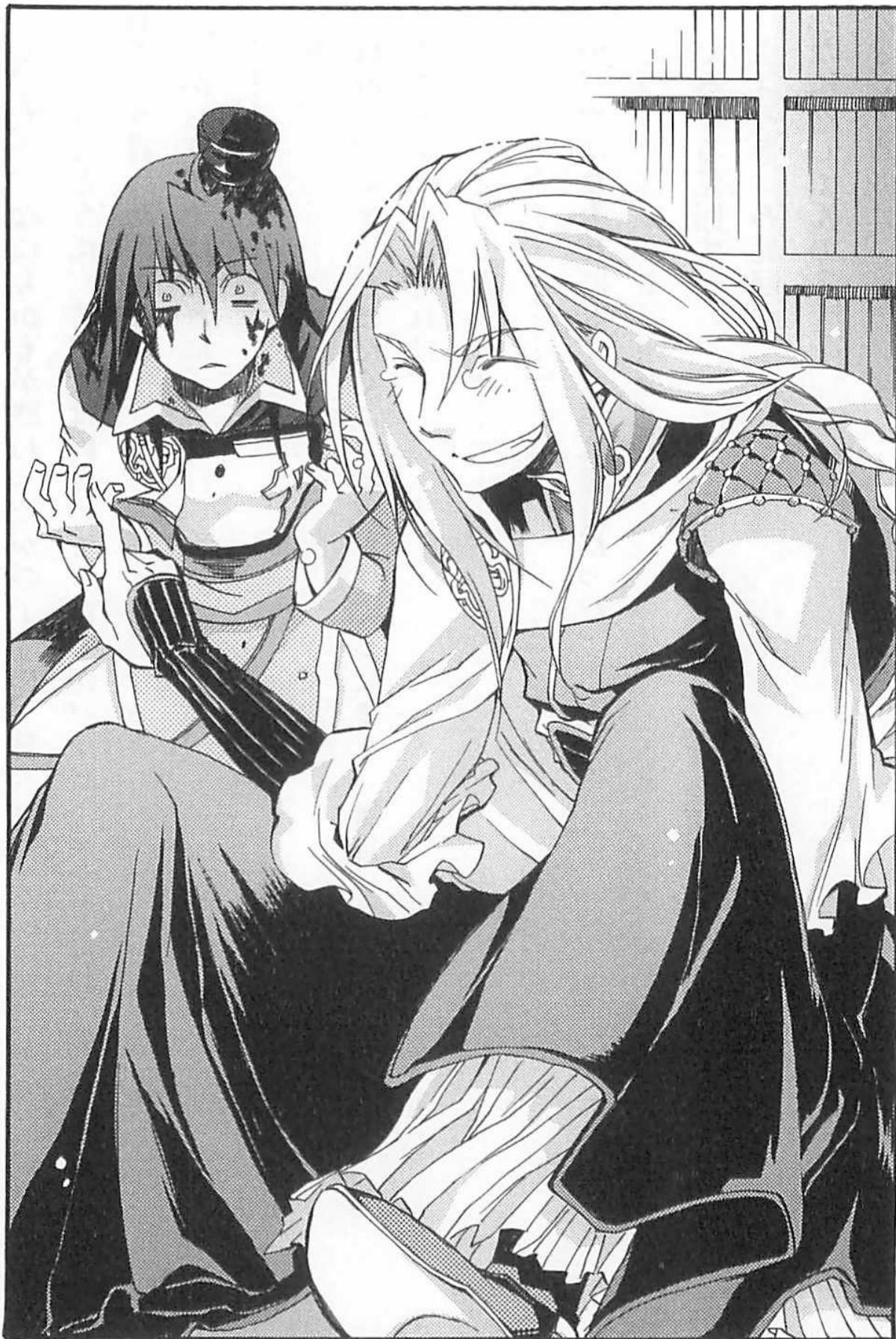
「……殺せ」

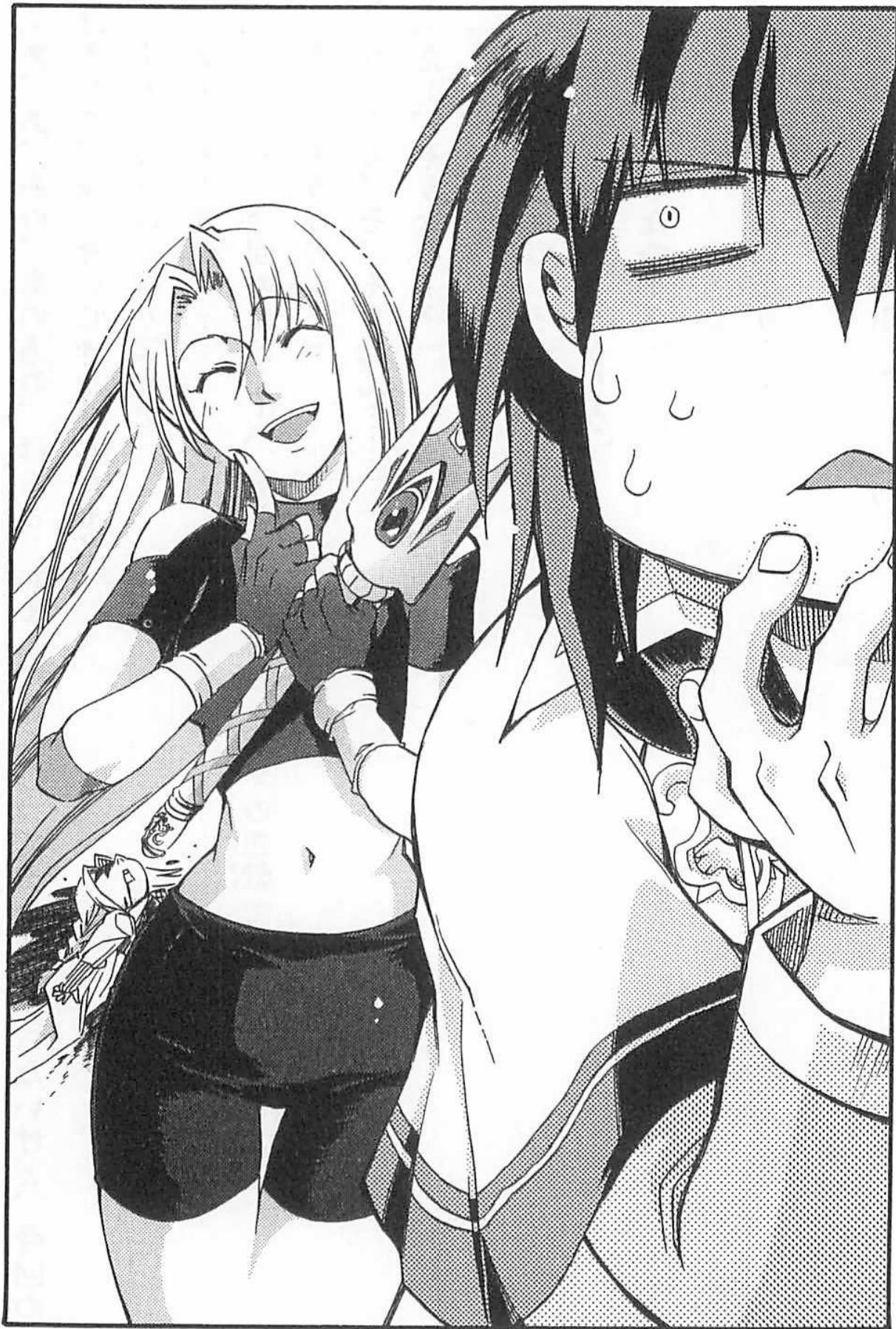


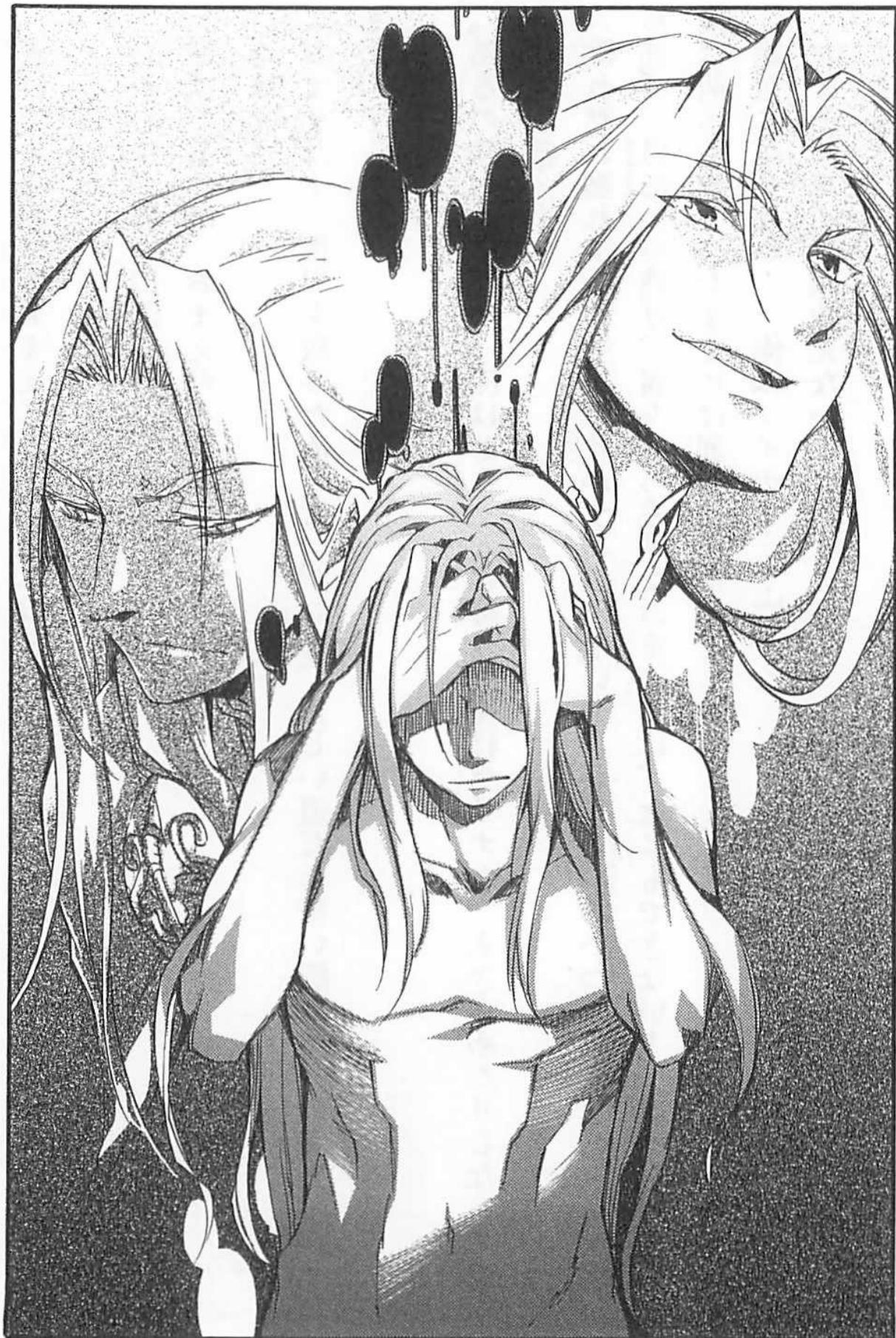




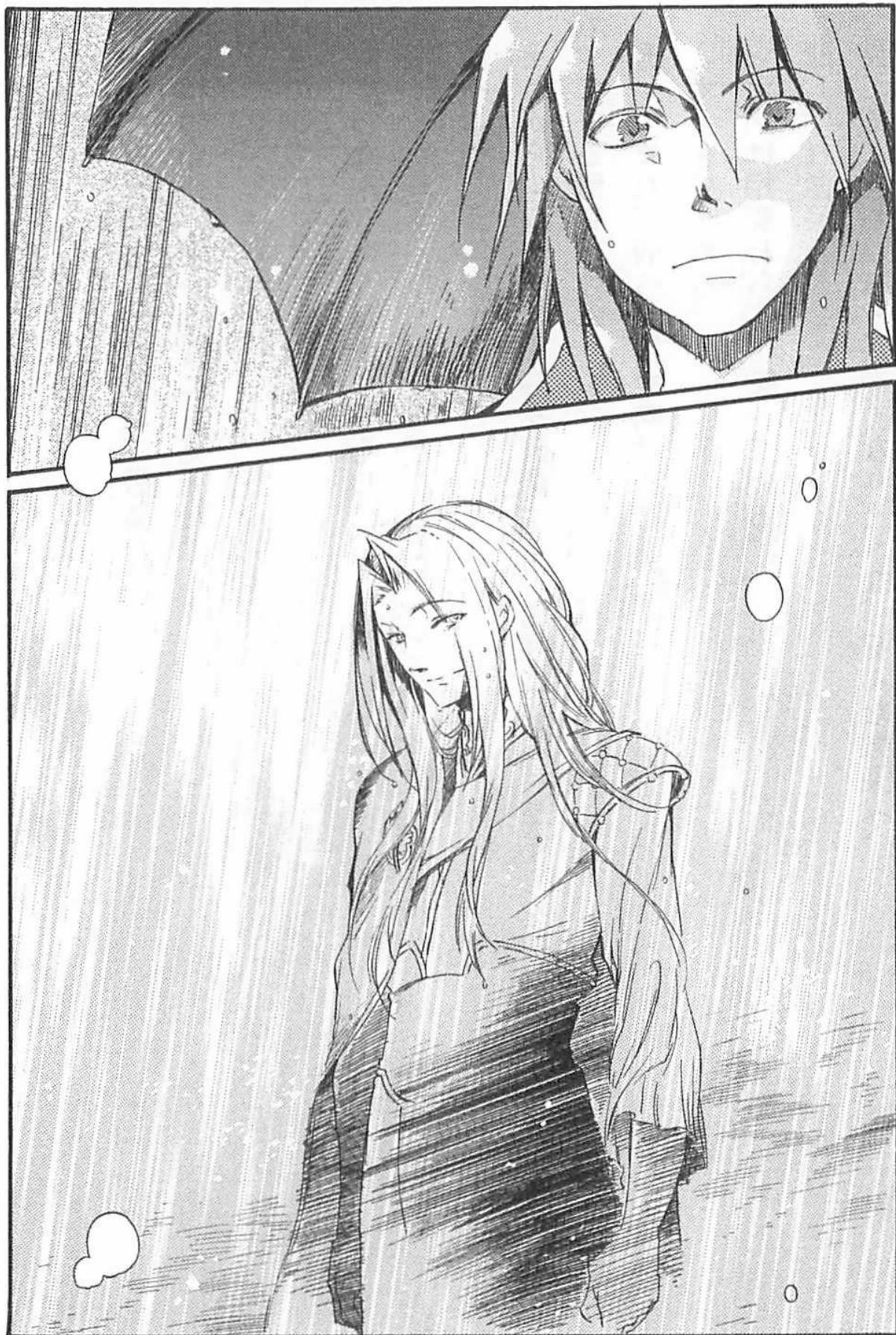
















Interlude: About eternity

In the distance.

A faint blush appeared on the distant horizon.

“...It’s like—”

As Ryner looked into the distance, he softly murmured.

“...Everything here is like an illusion.”

He was presently on the roof top of the palace.

He looked at the country that was approaching dawn from the highest point in the Roland Empire.

A red flush slowly entered the dark skies.

As if illuminating this whole country.

Then, Ryner looked to his side, at the man who was staring at this country as well.

Sion Astal.

Ryner’s friend... no, he was bad company? The young king of this country.

His expression looked extremely tired. No, it should be tired.

He worked his hardest for this country as if he were mad every day, and still pushed work to Ryner indiscriminately, this day was the fifth consecutive day that they had worked overnight together.

They were almost dying.

They had already reached the limit.

Their heads were starting to ache, the two people decided to come out to take a breath of fresh air, so they came to the roof.

“...Just breathing a bit of outside air can’t completely cure the headache?”

Ryner said, Sion revealed a wry smile.

“Perhaps?”

“Should we take an afternoon nap instead?”

“...Ah, but if we don’t work hard, it will affect the upcoming plans.”

Sion’s words made Ryner frown.

“As compared to worrying about your plans, you should worry more about your life.”

“...Ah, it’s still fine.”

Sion said, turning his gaze into the distance again.

Slowly.

The night faded from the sky slowly.

Sun rays shone down on the streets of Roland. Before the streets were an unlimited stretch of plans and mountain ranges.

But, Sion stared into a place more distant than that.

Ryner was affected by him, staring into the distance as well.

Then narrowed his eyes slightly.

Because standing here and seeing the scene before them could make him understand clearly, this country was largely different from the one from the mad period in the past.

It had been a few years since the Hero King Sion Astal ruled this country.

This country had changed.

The streets that were more active than the past stretched out before his eyes, the roads were maintained properly, the irrigation work was continuously pushed forward, the lives of people were more comfortable than the past.

Just by stepping on the streets it could be found that, everyone’s face had a smile, and they looked very happy.

And everyone was saying—

Being able to live in this country that Sion Astal-sama ruled, they could gain happiness.

This country had changed. It was no longer that mad Roland. Every person believed, as long as they lived in this country, as long as they were willing to work hard, they could gain happiness.

Yes.

This country was different from the past.

Due to Sion becoming king, this country was starting to change rapidly.

Then, Sion still thought this was insufficient.

He stared at a goal that was even further away, and looked forward to being able to let everyone live even happier, even more satisfied.

He worked madly, only to respond to the hopes of everyone.

In these few months that Ryner had returned to the country, Sion still worked hard till an abnormal extent.

As if he were possessed by something, working frantically.

This country was changing every day.

And it was changing in a good direction.

“...It really feels like an illusion.”

So Ryner said again softly.

Sion asked in return:

“...Eh? Illusion?”

“.....”

But, Ryner didn't reply.

He only stared at Roland that the night was slowly fading away from.

He remembered the distant past memories—

That was something not long after he met Sion.

When this country was still buried in the mad storm.

When they hadn't lost anything.

There was Kiefer, Tyle, and Toni, Fahl, and the others, at that time everyone was still alive.

That day when the next day was the day that they had to go onto the battle field.

Sion had cowered because of the fear.

What should he do to save his companions from death?

Is the road that I chose correct?

Can I protect my companions?

Did I take a good look at the world?

In the deep night, he was in the library, trembling, cowering, and ceaselessly reflecting like this.

Just like now.

Sion was always carrying the heavy duties alone, he was almost pressured to death.

But, in the intense loneliness that nearly made him die, he didn't show a hint of his weakness, always letting people see his smiling face.

Ryner still remembered clearly till this day.

At that moment, the conversation in that dark library with Sion—

“...I want to climb to the top without losing a single companion.”

Sion had said that, but, Ryner replied with a lifeless voice.

“Oh... you’re really greedy.”

“Eh.”

“Aren’t you tired?”

“.....If I answer you, will you keep this secret for me?”

“No.”

“Then I won’t reply.”

“Aren’t you tired?”

Ryner said in surprise, so Sion laughed, but stared at Ryner with a serious expression, saying this: *“...But, I think that there is value in that. Didn’t I say it? I want to change this country.”*

“So what if you change it?”

“Everyone can laugh and live their days out.”

“Oh?”

“I want to change everything. The unequal country, the country that bullies the weak, stopping conflicts...”

“This is old-fashioned. You’re saying as if it’s heaven... but, in the end it’s an illusion.”

Yes.

An illusion.

At that moment, he only felt that this thinking was too illusion-like.

The mad king.

The mad nobles.

The mad country.

Because everything was in a frenzy, he didn’t think that this world could really change.

But Sion said:

“I want to actualise... this kind of illusion-like dream. It seems like there is a

price of working hard a little, doesn't it? Even you would be ostracised only because of the Alpha Stigma, disgusting things... there wouldn't be any of that anymore."

"..."

"Help me, Ryner. Let us change this country together."

"..."

Then, Sion said this:

"Come with me, Ryner."

He reached out his hand.

Staring steadily at Ryner.

That was a pair of eyes that had no signs of being lost.

A pair of eyes that looked straight, only looking forward.

A pair of sharp eyes that made people feel the absolute confidence and strong will.

But.

"..."

But, Ryner knew.

He knew that was fake.

The real Sion was constantly dubious, he was cowering, trembling.

He was always asking himself—

Is my choice right?

Is my choice able to save anyone?

Even so, he was still determined to move forward.

To save someone.

To help someone.

So that this world would progress in a better direction, even if it were only that little bit.

He was determined to move forward.

And, he reached his hand over directly.

“Come with me, Ryner.”

He said that.

That hand was filled with confidence.

But, because of fear it was trembling vigorously, it was trembling so much that it made people feel sad.

Because he felt, if no one... if no one grabbed the hand and supported him, this person would collapse one day.

So, Ryner grabbed that hand.

And he thought that it was right of him to do that.

Now he stood on the roof top and looked at this country, feeling that it was right to do that at that time.

So—

“...I’m really sorry.”

Ryner said softly again.

So Sion displayed a shocked expression.

“Eh? What are you sorry about?”

He asked that.

Ryner shrugged.

“...It’s the things said before, I have to correct myself.”

“Eh? What?”

Sion asked again, Ryner still looked forward, saying:

“...It’s not an illusion-like dream.”

That day the illusion-like dream that Sion had said, it was slowly actualising.

The mad king had disappeared.

The mad nobles were controlled.

The country where everyone had equal status, and could laugh and live.

Roland had indeed slowly turned into this kind of country.

So—

“...You probably don’t remember, but... the things you said that day were not illusions...”

But.

But Sion said unhappily at this time:

“...It’s an illusion.”

Ryner heard that, turning to look at Sion.

So he smiled with a tired expression again, smiling with an expression as if he were about to cry.

Saying with a self-mocking tone:

“...It’s an illusion, Ryner. I remembered at that time I said ‘without losing a single companion’, but... but say, how many companions could survive? Because of the beautiful picture I illustrated, how many companions died at that time? How many...”

But, Ryner interrupted him.

“But... Sion, even so, the words you said weren’t all illusion-like dreams, this country has changed. If there weren’t you, this country would still be enshrouded in darkness.”

Saying that, Ryner stared at the distant streets again.

The sun rays had started to shine on the streets dazzlingly.

The night, darkness had completely faded.

The sun rays made Ryner scowl slightly. After the long overnight, facing the sun was a little too piercing for his tired eyes. Under the piercing sunlight, the streets started to stir.

The scene of the streets that was completely different from before.

A country that the people didn't have to fear the mad king, and could live expansively.

A country that people didn't have to fear the mad nobles, and could live expansively.

A country that people didn't have to be frightened of war, and could live steadily.

In the process there had been many sacrifices caused, not everything could progress that smoothly.

But, even so.

"...It is already enough."

Ryner said that.

"You are already working very hard. I'm clear about that. So, there is no need to bury yourself in work as if you're bullying yourself..."

Sion heard that.

"..."

He didn't say anything.

But Ryner said again:

"It's already enough, this country has changed enough. Even if you laze off a bit now, it wouldn't become the way it was in the past."

"..."

"You do not have to be that worried and scared like you were in the past..."

“Did I do something wrong again? Was there any way I could have done it in a better way?” Look, you have Ferris and I now... Aside that you have what are those called? That red-headed idiot, the pervert who is always leaning towards mature women, you have many companions... Relax, this country is fine. You don’t have to carry all the responsibilities alone anymore. This country has changed, and it is changing in a good direction.”

Sion heard that, staring at Ryner.

“...Is that so?”

He said with a tired expression.

Ryner nodded with the same tired expression.

“Eh.”

“...This country has changed?”

“Eh.”

“...Is that so...”

Sion murmured.

Then, suddenly seeming to want to tell Ryner something...

“...”

But, he shook his head, then smiled.

“Thank you.”

He said softly.

Ryner heard that, then shrugged again.

“Then, we should go sleep too? Honestly speaking, regarding the matter of committing suicide with you, I have already felt tired of it.”

Saying that, for some reason, Sion had a surprised expression.

“Eh? Speaking of that, in the time I was sleeping, Ryner worked for me, and didn’t rest for the sake of Roland...”

“Because if you continued working you would die!”

Ryner shouted, Sion laughed.

“...Working overnight for more than five days... even I feel something’s not right.”

He said that, Ryner said in a depressed manner when he heard that:

“Ah, I hope you could have noticed this matter when we worked overnight for two days...”

Sion laughed again when he heard this, then stretched forcefully.

“Then, let’s sleep for a while?”

“Eh... then I’m returning to the inn.”

Ryner said, turning to leave, Sion waved at him too.

“Eh. Then, when you wake up, I will send a carriage over to receive you, when you’ve woken we’ll continue working?”

“No.”

Ryner rejected flatly, Sion ignored him.

“Then let’s meet in three hours.”

“Ah?! Are you an idiot?! Starting from now, three hours after I’ve left? Then I’m almost not sleeping at all!”

“Eh? Then how many hours later?”

“Like three hundred hours later?”

“Hey hey, three hundred hours... are you planning to sleep for ten days and above... Ah, forget it, then how about, we compromise, so four hours later?”

“How is that compromisiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiing?! Forget it, I know, then how about this, I’ll give in a little, I’ll tolerate four hundred hours later...”

“Isn’t this back to the beginning... Forget it, then I’ll send the carriage over when I’ve woken up.”

“You have to at least sleep more than eight hours?”

“Eh? E, eight hours? That would be sleeping too...”

“That’s because your senses are mixed up! You sleep too little!”

“Is that so?”

“Yes!”

“...Ugh. Then, let’s meet more than eight hours later.”

“Eh. Then I’ll go back.”

“Eh. Good night~”

“Good night~”

Saying that, Ryner left with shaky steps.

He walked to the exit from the roof, turning back, he looked at Sion who was still looking at the streets.

“Then let’s meet in ten days’ time.”

“Hey!”

Sion turned back abruptly, wanting to call him back, Ryner ignored him, leaving the roof top.

The weather was clear that day, it felt like a refreshing good day.

Perhaps it was related to the fact that it was a public holiday? There were sounds of the noisy laughter of children from the distance.

“Really, you’re really noisy. I’m majorly sleep deprived.”

No one was willing to listen to Ryner’s grumbles.

This was the world that Sion had created.

“...”

Ryner looked at the clear skies with half-lidded eyes.

“It’s really good weather to have an afternoon nap.”

He murmured softly.

Chapter 8: Truth

There was someone who met darkness by chance.

A deep darkness.

So she thought in her heart.

It's so unfair—

Doing this was really too unfair—

“...Why does this kind of thing have to be done...”

Milk Callaud said with a trembling voice.

Bit by bit.

It had started to appear bit by bit.

This country was starting to become strange.

This country was starting to become strange bit by bit.

Because the appearance of the Hero King Sion Astal who saved this country, overthrowing the previous tyrant king, this land should be having a peaceful life.

The Hero King should change everything for everyone's sake.

And now, the Roland Empire was starting to slowly, bit by bit contort because of that Hero King.

“...What is going on?”

Milk's voice was trembling.

Her whole body was trembling.

A scene that should not exist was displayed before her eyes.

On the outskirts of Roland.

The mansion of the nobles that was arrogantly standing.

Her body trembled because of fear, staring at the squad that was roughly around hundreds of people, surrounding the mansion.

Hundreds of soldiers.

But, those hundreds of soldiers—they had no human figure.

Some of people's skin were charred, a magic structure tattoo was burnt in the middle of their faces.

Some of the people had two arms chopped off, strange curved weapons were installed.

And even more people, people, people, people...

All the soldiers here had undergone some sort of modification, there were even some who had lost their initial human form.

But, they were human.

"...Human experiments..."

Milk said as if moaning.

In the past Roland, this wasn't a strange thing.

Soldiers who seek to become stronger, magicians who seek to become more powerful, more incredible, didn't hesitate to kill people, proceeding with experiments, proceeding with research, playing with people's lives.

Milk, even Ryner were one of the sacrifices. They were forced to kill each other inside the mad orphanage, because they were lucky they survived, so they could be here today. In the mad Roland of the past, this kind of matter was a common thing.

But, it was not the same now.

The current country shouldn't be like that.

Because the Hero King had appeared.

Because the Hero King who saved the country had appeared.

Because Sion Astal saved this country.

Because of him, this country shouldn't turn back to that of the past.

“...But, why is it like that?”

Why did things turn out this way?

“Why is it...”

Milk muttered lowly, then stared at the soldiers who had strange appearances.

No, not only the soldiers before her.

Ever since Milk returned to Roland, she had already seen a few sacrifices who accepted this kind of experiment.

It was more than half a year ago that she first met this kind of person.

Milk found that strange things were happening to the country, and started to investigate, then she immediately met it.

She was suddenly excluded from the mission of capturing the “Taboo Breaker” Ryner Lute, accepting another mission other than that, during this mission, she met him.

The contents of the mission she was to carry out, was like usual to pursue, capture the Taboo Breaker who had escaped from Roland.

So Milk worked hard to pursue, capture the Taboo Breaker.

But, that Taboo Breaker was a youth who was still very young.

And he was a victim of the human experimentation in the army.

When Milk met that youth, his body already had the tattoos of **zenkekai** imprinted on it, and he was on the verge of death.

What was called **Zenkekai** was using surgery, forcefully imprinting the tattoo that was made from magic structures on a child's body, activating the **kekai** for the long term run, having the ability to feel things happening in a large area beyond the normal means.

But, normal people were unable to wield such a large amount of power, the children buried in the tattoos would most likely die.

Even if they lives, they would lose their sight and hearing.

This was a kind of most evil experiment.

This kind of experiment should be long forbidden after Sion Astal became the king of this country.

But, the body of the youth had that kind of **Zenkekai** covering it. Because of the side effects, his head was burnt, his whole body was shrunken, he vomited ceaselessly, because of the pain he cried and shouted, no matter what he still attempted to escape Roland.

In the end with a cry.

He died in Milk's arms.

The youth grabbed onto Milk tightly, as he trembled, he said this—

Next time, I wish I can laugh like a normal person.

Next time, if I am able to reincarnate, I want to make some friends.

Next time, I want to laugh in a peaceful world.

He had died like that in Milk's arms.

The youth should have normally died under the situation where he wasn't able to retain any dreams, in the borders of peaceful Roland.

But, that was only the start of the nightmare.

After that, Milk ceaselessly pursued, captured several Taboo Breakers who escaped from Roland.

In the next year, the Taboo Breakers that she pursued reached eighteen people.

Nearly all were victims of human experimentation.

But, in truth there wasn't any need to capture them.

Because when Milk caught up with them, they still smiled in satisfaction at being able to see a sky other than Roland's at the last moment.

When their consciousness was slowly blurring, they smiled and were grateful that they were able to escape from Roland at the end of their life, having normal human conversation with Milk.

They told Milk:

"Thank you for not bringing me back at the end of my life."

"Thank you for staying by my side at the end of my life."

"Thank you for talking to me in the last moments of my life."

"Thank you for calling my name in the last moments of my life. This is the first time that someone has called my real name, in my whole life..."

They said that.

Actually Milk couldn't do anything for them, but they cried as they thanked her.

Milk wasn't able to do anything for them.

"...This country is mad."

Milk thought. It was clearly crazy.

And, everything was the orders of that man.

That man called the Hero King.

Sion Astal.

"...This is Roland's darkness..."

The darkness that Luke or Miller, Lear, Moe and the others didn't let Milk see.

“But, this is the real Roland...”

Milk looked before her.

The hundreds of victims of experimentation.

These people settled into their positions, surrounding the mansion.

In the late night.

She had incidentally discovered Luke slipping out of the quarters of the Taboo Breaker Pursuit Squad, and had secretly followed along, in the end they came here.

“...What is Luke doing here?”

Milk had followed him with a long distance between them, to avoid being found by Luke, thus, when she reached this mansion, she couldn’t see his figure.

“...Is Luke in there already?”

Milk said, looking at the mansion.

For a noble’s mansion, this building was too small.

But, according to Milk’s memory, she hadn’t heard of any noble’s villa in this region.

“Then, whose residence is it? And, what is Luke doing here? And...”

And bringing these soldiers with strange appearances.

And the existence of a secret that Milk wasn’t aware of.

Luke and the others were always like that. To protect Milk, in the end they were unwilling to tell her the truth.

Half a year ago.

She remembered before she met that youth, Luke had said this:

“...If possible, I hope not to let Captain Milk see the side of darkness for now...”

He had said that.

Darkness.

Yes.

This was darkness.

“What are Luke and the others doing amidst that darkness...”

But, Milk wasn’t able to say anything else.

Suddenly.

Followed by a boom sound, the roof of the noble’s mansion flew up.

And what appeared was—

“...Wh, what is that...”

A huge white snake had appeared.

No, it was words?

Something like white words overlapped in layers and were linked to each other, forming a snake’s shape.

What was that?

Magic?

No, she had never seen that kind of magic.

Then, what was that...

But, at this moment Milk stopped pondering.

Because there was a person Milk was familiar with near the mouth of that huge white snake.

A tall, white haired young man.

Milk saw that, her eyes widening.

“...Lu, Luke?!”

She shouted.

But Luke didn’t seem to have any extra strength to react to her voice.

He used something like a thread, that sparkled under the moonlight to tie up

the snake's mouth, desperately controlling the snake, so that he wouldn't be eaten by the snake.

“...You monster!”

Luke used a strong voice that Milk had never seen before to shout, tightening the thread in his hands.

So, the snake head was immediately shredded to pieces by the thread, returning to normal words.

“It worked!”

Milk saw that, couldn't help but say in surprise, but the white words gathered again, resuming the snake shape.

“Eh~?!”

This time, she let out a surprised call.

But, in this period, the snake still opened its mouth, attempting to swallow Luke...

Milk saw that.

“Wa, waaaaaaaaa?! No! Wait, it can't be...wait... Luke?! I, I'll go save you now~”

She shouted, making to rush up.

Rushing over to where the huge snake and Luke were.

But—

“No, Captain Milk! Luke-senpai can deal with that kind of blow, please relax.”

A voice suddenly sounded from behind, Milk's arms were grabbed.

That voice was familiar too.

Milk turned back when she heard that.

So she saw her subordinates there.

Lear who was always calm, and rash Lach, and innocent Moe.

“You, you all?! Why are you here?!”

Milk asked when she saw them, but she instantly—

“No! Luke, Luke will be eaten!”

Saying that, he made to run forward again, Lear pulled her harder.

“Please calm down, Captain Milk. Look, Luke-senpai is already fine.”

Milk raised her head when she heard that, looking above the mansion.

Luke was stabbing a dagger on the snake’s mouth, using that blade as a stepping board to climb to the snake’s head, then running down the snake’s back, and was about to return to the mansion.

“He, he succeeded! He wasn’t eaten!”

Moe said when he heard that: “Amazing, Luke-senpai!”

“Hah! How can Luke-senpai be eaten by those kind of monsters that aren’t famous!” Lach said too.

Lastly Lear used his usual calm voice to say:

“I said so? It will be fine. So, Captain, please calm down.”

Milk nodded forcefully.

Please calm down! With this sentence from them, Milk could really calm down.

Milk trusted them that much.

Companions who definitely won’t betray her.

The first family that Milk had in her life.

“...”

But after she calmed down and thought about it, she discovered, it was a strange thing that they would be here. Because Milk had sneakily slipped out of the officers’ quarters, tailing Luke and coming here. She had carefully not let anyone find her tracks, hiding her presence and making a movement.

She tensed the nerves in her whole body, studying the movements around her cautiously.

So when someone was in the distance where they could grab her arm, it wasn't possible that she didn't discover it.

But, now Lear and the others appeared behind her, and Milk completely didn't find out about this.

They had hidden their presence perfectly, preventing Milk from finding out, then followed at Milk's side.

That meant—

“...”

It represented that their abilities were higher than hers.

Always, they had always said, Captain Milk is amazing, strong, impressive, the Captain was unopposable.

In truth, they were much stronger than Milk.

“...”

Ugh, although she vaguely had this kind of feeling in the past...

Milk's eyebrows formed a ^ shape, she laughed bitterly lightly.

But, they were here, this matter itself was a strange matter.

Even if there were a greater difference between their strengths, they couldn't predict that Milk would suddenly slipped out of the officers' quarters today, and come here tailing Luke.

But, they were actually here.

As if they knew long ago that Milk would be here.

Milk stared at the faces of her subordinates steadily.

“...Don't tell me, you all were al~ways watching me?”

In an instant, Moe panicked.

“Eh? Ah, no, what watching are you talking about, that, that... right, Lach?”

So Lach panicked too.

“Eh, eh?! Are you throwing the hot rock to me? Eh, that, ah, no, you said it's

surveillance, you should say that it's that... right, Lear?"

Lear heard that, smiling lightly as if surprised, then nodded.

"...Yes. We are watching you. Actually Luke-senpai ordered us earlier, "Captain Milk might be starting to have her suspicions about our actions, so please watch the captain closely"."

Milk heard that, and couldn't help but want to hug her head.

"Captain Milk might be starting to have her suspicions about our actions, so please watch the captain closely."

Because, this sentence made Milk feel like her thoughts were completely seen through.

But, Luke was always like that.

He was always smiling widely, he seemed a little dense, but he received trust from his subordinates, to Milk he was like a grandfather doting a lot on his granddaughter.

But, at the most important time, he was as if seeing though everything, guided Milk and Lach, Lear, Moe and the whole squad.

So that Milk would not see the side of darkness.

As he deliberately allowed Milk not to see the dirty side of the world, he tried his best to protect her.

So...

So Milk didn't like this.

Everyone was working hard so that she wouldn't see the dirty side, working hard to let her surroundings be filled with happy things.

And Luke said before—he said, the captain is always suffering, so there's nothing bad about enjoying this treatment.

Everyone said, we want to make you happier, we hope you can laugh even more happily.

But, it was already enough.

All the time, she was alone, and now everyone was by her side, laughing together with her. Just by having that was enough.

So, this time, I hope that they can let me see the dirty dark side.

I hope they can let me protect the things including those in the darkness.

I don't want to be always protected by them, I want to protect everyone too.

So...

“...”

Milk stared steadily at her subordinates standing before her.

Then said:

“Enter the mansion...”

Lear grabbed Milk's arm tightly again.

“No, you can't do that.”

Actually this was something she could foresee. Thinking about it carefully it actually wasn't hard to understand, Lear and the others could probably stop Milk before she reached here. But, Milk could reach this place smoothly.

And that meant—

“This is Luke's orders too? It's Luke who said, that I can watch this part?”

Milk asked, so Lear revealed an even more troubled expression, then said:

“...Yes, he said if the captain wants to know... because the gears of this country have started to turn...”

The gears.

Lear said that.

Because the gears have started to turn.

But, what are the gears?

Milk looked at the mansion.

The mansion without its roof that was destroyed, the huge snake that was never seen before, flying out from inside, the strange army surrounding it and awaiting orders outside.

An abnormal scene.

An obviously abnormal scene.

Gears.

Yes. Indeed the gears were starting to turn.

Gulu gulu, gulu gulu, the gears turned.

Every rotation it made, the world would have strife once.

The world was contorting.

The world he built.

The world built by that king that everyone had expectations for.

The world built by that king that definitely would not be wrong.

This country that Sion Astal built, was slowly starting to reveal its true image.

The light that existed before their eyes was not one of hope.

It was despair.

Despair.

Despair.

Despair.

“...”

Milk frowned.

One year after she returned to Roland. The scene reflected in her eyes was only despair.

There was no peaceful world or anything at all.

There was no world that the perfect king had built, that everyone could laugh and live their days at all.

The Hero King and anything, in actuality it didn't exist at all.

The perfect king or anything, it completely didn't exist.

There was only a man like the demon—like the previous king.

But, even so...

Milk stared at the mansion.

“...Even so, then who are we fighting for?”

She said with a trembling voice.

Then she remembered.

She remembered the first time she met that demon.

She remembered the first time she met Sion Astal.

Sion laughed.

That king who had been called perfect had a perfect smile, suddenly bestowing the rank of Lieutenant on Milk, and giving her the role of the captain of the Taboo Breaker Pursuit Squad.

But, what was the motive?

Unless there was no reason and he just randomly chose Milk, allowing her to have the chance to be outstanding?

That was hilarious, there couldn't be anything like that happening. Sion Astal shouldn't be that kind of person.

Throwing off the previous king that had been a tyrant, the unmatched Hero King who in the blink of an eye took this country into his hands the best he could, there was no reason for him to do such a crazy move without reason.

Everything existed for a meaning.

His every action must have a special reason to it.

Sion said this when he saw Milk:

“Ah, my subordinates are all talented. They arranged all the information there was after your birth for me, including the matter about you staying in the Roland Special Institute #307...”

Everything about Milk had been investigated clearly.

Then... then, for what motive did Sion Astal lock on to me?

She had already begun to see the truth.

The key was this—

“Roland Special Institute #307”.

That was the name of the orphanage that Milk had been in before.

And, that genius was there.

The perfect killing machine.

The black haired demon.

The **Alpha Stigma** monster—Ryner Lute.

And now, Ryner was by Sion Astal’s side.

Ryner was Sion’s subordinate, working for him.

But, Milk was on orders to pursue Ryner who was a Taboo Breaker, and escaped Roland for no reason. And, she had been arranged to capture Ryner with these outstanding subordinates Luke and Lear, Lach, Moe.

These matters clearly were problematic when she looked at them now.

Milk who was Sion’s subordinate was pursuing Ryner who was Sion’s subordinate.

This was truly too odd.

It was as if it were a drama.

As if it were a hide and seek game between playmates.

Not only did Milk have no serious intention of catching Ryner, she even let him escape on purpose, but Luke and the others didn’t say anything on this matter, even her superiors Major Miller, and Sion Astal didn’t say anything.

This matter was clearly suspicious.

Previously why did she not notice the oddness in this?

Actually if she thought about it slightly she could understand.

It was clearly from the start, the information had already been complete.

“...I...”

Milk said softly.

I am the hostage to keep Ryner in Roland.

A hostage for Sion Astal to use the genius Ryner Lute.

And Luke and the others are responsible for surveillance.

At this moment, Milk remembered it again.

She remembered Sion's face.

The face of the king of this country. Noble silver hair, and a pair of sharp golden eyes that gave off a strong will, a perfect smile always on his lips.

The king that everyone had anticipated.

The Hero King that was definitely right.

But, his smile was too perfect.

It was too perfect, to the extent that it seemed like it would be destroyed immediately if touched.

Just like Ryner in the past.

It was the same expression that was on Ryner's face when he was in that orphanage.

It was too perfect, causing him to be unable to confide in anyone.

It was too perfect, causing him to shoulder the responsibility for everything important alone.

And it was slowly contorting.

Sinking into the lonely darkness.

“...”

Milk looked at the strangely shaped soldiers surrounding the mansion.

What were these people?

Milk recalled the scene of destruction of the Callaud house that had brought her up.

What was going on with that?

Milk thought of the figures of the children who had cried as they died in her arms.

What was going on?

Sion Astal was already...

“...”

Was he already starting to go mad?

Milk's whole body trembled.

She tremored and muttered:

“...What are we chasing after?”

The Hero King who saw through everything.

Or the mad king, whose rationality was destroyed?

Which one was Sion Astal?

Milk stared at Lear.

“...”

But, she didn't say anything.

Only stared at him.

Lear saw that and it seemed like he understood what Milk wanted to say, he revealed a slightly sad, but also a little troubled expression and said: "...The things that Captain Milk think of must be right."

He said that.

Milk heard that.

“...You're saying my thinking about His Majesty being mad? Or... everything that has happened in this country... is progressing according to His Majesty's

plans?"

Faced with this question, Lear replied:

"...The latter."

The latter.

That meant, the gears were turning according to Sion's plans.

Human experiments.

The deaths of children.

The destruction of the Callauds.

The strangely formed soldiers that Luke led.

Taking Milk as a hostage.

Using Ryner.

So, the gears started to turn.

Gulu gulu, gulu gulu. The gears spun.

Every time a gear turned, the darkness of this country would have another layer of blackness added to it.

So it opened up.

Because the despair was too deep.

The darkness opened its maw...

"...Then, what is our position?"

Milk moved her gaze away from Lear's face, looking towards the mansion again, then asked.

What is our position?

The middle of the darkness?

Or, against the darkness?

Faced with Milk's question, Lear replied like this—

“...We are eternally on His Majesty's side.”

Milk heard this.

“...”

In an instant she couldn't breathe.

The meaning that Lear's reply represented.

They were the companions of Sion Astal who carried out this kind of human experimentation.

And that meant, the strangely formed soldiers before them, and the children who died in Milk's arms, these were all the doings of Milk's companions.

We are the ones who killed those children who cried and died.

“...This... this is what Luke and you all have been hiding from me until now, the dark side of Roland?”

Milk asked, Lear said with a slightly sad tone again:

“...Do you have a kind of disillusioned feeling?”

But, Milk heard that. “...”

She shook her head.

“I wouldn't have any feelings of disillusionment.”

She said that.

“...I wouldn't feel disillusioned. Because, because I understand Luke and Lear, and the others, the best is that not so? I wouldn't feel disillusioned.”

At this moment, Milk turned back, looking at Lear and Lach, Moe, everyone's faces looked extremely unsettled.

Milk saw that, thinking in her heart, actually you don't have to feel that unsettled.

Because, I will not lose my trust of everyone because of this kind of thing.

I was always alone, always taking the matter of being able to see Ryner again as the value in living, and everyone saw me as family... and, they were more caring towards me than my real family... always protecting me...

Then, let me hold the feelings of protecting you all.

I learnt about the meaning of life from everyone.

Even more so now.

How can I feel disillusioned because of this kind of thing now?

So.

“...Don’t worry, I wouldn’t have feelings of disillusionment because of this kind of thing. So, you don’t have to have such uneasy expressions. Because I... I trust you all.”

Milk said this.

For some reason, when Lear heard this, his whole face twisted, as if trying his best to stop from crying, that Lear who was always calmer than others was nearly crying for something like this.

Lach and Moe who were behind already had tears flowing down their faces.

You’re so silly. – Milk wanted to say this.

There’s no need to cry for something like this.

The trust that I have in everyone wouldn’t be destroyed because of this kind of thing.

But.

“...”

But, because of this, so the darkness was deeper.

The darkness that enshrouded this country was even deeper.

Because, if it were not for this, then Luke or Lear, the others wouldn’t need to do something cruel like this meaninglessly.

Luke and the others that I trust, they probably wouldn’t follow a mad king.

That means, the deaths of those children.

The strangely-shaped squad before them.

Ryner who was used.

The Callaud family that was destroyed.

Everything was necessary.

Sion and Luke and the others dirtied their initially clean hands without hesitation, there must be a reason for them to reach this step.

But, what was it that made it necessary for them to reach this stage?

“...What happened to Roland...”

Milk stopped half-way through.

Because the moonlight suddenly disappeared from their surroundings.

No, it wasn't. It was from the surroundings of Milk and the others, the light in the sky, everything that was shining on the ground were all sucked in the direction of the mansion.

The world lost all light.

“Wh, what is this...?!”

Milk asked that.

At the same time, Lear said:

“Ugh... This doesn't feel good. Lach, Moe, protect the captain!”

Lach and Moe heard that, carrying Milk in the darkness without a single shred of light.

“We're escaping, Captain!”

“Please don't get hurt!”

“Uh, eh? W, wait... what is happening...”

But, she wasn't given a chance to finish speaking.

What happened next was light.

A piercing, light filled with overwhelming power spread out from the mansion

Booooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

Followed with a ear-splitting sound, the darkness was sliced open.

The strong light was released from the mansion in a straight beam, causing the ground—the whole of it to be dug up.

“...Th, what was that?”

Milk saw that, only able to say this sentence.

When the world resumed its normal light, an unbelievable sight appeared before them.

First was the noble's mansion had disappeared completely.

The strangely shaped soldiers that were awaiting orders where the light shone had been completely destroyed.

And before them, the garden, forest, mountains and all the scenery before the mansion—

Everything had been destroyed.

Leaving an empty wilderness.

Every object had been swallowed by the light, disappearing without a trace.

“...That just now, what was that...”

A large scale destruction magic?

No, just by looking at its range, it didn't seem like magic.

The destructive power of the highest military level magic of Roland, that took sixty magicians to activate couldn't even reach a tenth of this.

Then, what was that?

“What is Luke going up against...”

At this moment—

“...Eh? I didn't think we would meet here... what a coincidence.”

Suddenly, behind Milk... a voice sounded, and it was by her ear.

“Eh...?”

Milk turned back when she heard that, but, she didn’t see anyone.

She only saw Lach and Moe collapsed on the ground.

“La, La...”

But, just when she was about to call them, the voice spoke from behind her again.

“I didn’t kill them. Rest assured. On the other hand, I didn’t think I would meet you here, what a coincidence, Milk Callaud. Initially I was thinking of finding you later... it’s just nice, let us end things here then.”

Saying that, a hand reached over swiftly from behind her. Making as if to hug Milk.

That hand was glowing.

It was surrounded with a blue-white colour, strange blurry light.

That hand reached towards Milk’s chest...

But at this moment—

“...This way, Captain.”

Lear grabbed Milk’s collar, pulling her over.

So Milk luckily left the place.

Milk turned back.

Looking at the place where the owner of the blue-white coloured hand was.

So she saw a man who was around forty years old standing there at some point in time.

He had golden hair and dark blue eyes.

He wore an ancient neat black western outfit.

But.

“...”

But, these were unimportant.

More importantly, it was his face that attracted Milk's gaze.

A strangely steady, lazy sort of expression.

Because that face gave her a feeling as if she recognised it.

No, she had never seen it. She didn't recognise this person.

But, this face...

“...”

For some reason, this guy was like Ryner, they were so alike that they could be family.

“You, you are...”

Just as Milk was about to ask, Lear moved in front of her as if protecting her.

“...Don't touch her...”

He glared viciously at the man.

Momentarily, an intense killing aura was released from Lear's body, it was that kind that Milk had never seen before.

What a strong killing intent. An intense killing intent that made Milk who was protected by him momentarily tense, being unable to move.

But, the man before them laughed foolishly.

“Oh oh, what a scary killing aura. But, you should move away. Going against me with that standard of power, it's equivalent to a suicidal action?”

“...To lose my life to protect my comrades, we don't call that suicide.”

“Lear!”

Milk screamed, but Lear did not reply. Only glaring straight at the man.

The man saw that, he still said with a foolishly smiling expression:

“But, with your power you can't protect your companions. Not being able to protect your companions and losing your life, that is called dying for nothing. Listen, let her...”

But, at this moment Lear had already leapt out.

Reaching to his arms, he took out a knife, shortening the distance between him and the man in a moment, stabbing the knife towards his heart.

His movements were swift and accurate.

Milk would probably be unable to react properly to that kind of speed, Lear's movements were that intensely quick.

Lear stabbed with his knife in the opportune moment that people definitely wouldn't be able to dodge, with the sound of a thump, cleanly stabbing the chest of the man. The fight ended because of that.

“...”

It should have been like that.

But.

“...I told you so? You aren't able to be my opponent.”

The man laughed as if it was nothing.

A knife was clearly stabbed in the position of his heart.

Lear moved that knife as if digging something, but not a single drop of blood flowed out of the man.

Not only that, that knife was slowly engulfed by the man's chest.

And even Lear's arm was swallowed in.

“You monster...”

Lear frowned when he saw this.

But, the man laughed again.

“That's right, I'm a monster. And, this is a place where a monster like me is gathered... It's not a place that a good boy like you should come to. So leave immediately, there's no need to waste a life for nothing. There wouldn't be anything that would happen to make you worry, I'm only going to cast a necessary spell on her, I will disappear immediately...”

But, at this moment the man stopped.

Because a voice that Milk was very familiar with sounded from behind the man.

“If that’s so, then please disappear immediately.”

A steady and gently voice.

Milk turned her gaze to the place where the voice had appeared from, a white haired tall man.

“Luke?!”

Milk shouted.

But, Luke didn’t look at her.

“We’ll speak later, Captain. I have to deal with this guy now.”

Saying that, his hands moved, some kind of extremely slender thing like light flew, strangling the man’s throat tightly.

“Ugh...”

The man frowned as if it were painful, then he spun behind, looking behind him.

“...You~again? I clearly released “**Shirosatoruhebi**”’s...”

Luke spoke without a change in expression when he heard that:

“Shirosatoruhebi? You’re talking about that big snake just now? I destroyed it earlier, next it’s your turn.”

The man shrugged.

“Ah, eh, speaking of which, there was that Rahel Miller, and the descendant of Saint Knight Miran present, it might have been too much of a burden for **Shirosatoruhebi**...”

But, he didn’t finish speaking, Luke pulled his arm back forcefully.

In an instant.

A kacha sound that made people feel uncomfortable sounded—the man’s head dropped to the ground.

Luke...

Luke killed a person without blinking an eye.

Milk saw that.

“...Lu, Luke.”

She wanted to call him, but she was stopped by his hand.

“It’s still not fine yet. Don’t move first...”

Then, he stared at the head of the man that was rolling on the ground.

“Anyway you wouldn’t die right?”

So.

An unimaginable thing happened.

The head that was rolling on the ground rolled by itself.

“Eh? I was found out?”

The head on the ground stuck out its tongue and said.

“Eeehhhh?! That...”

Milk was so surprised by this extremely unimaginable situation that she couldn’t speak, and Luke sighed.

“I have already chopped off your head three times, every time you revive... I am more or less used to it... but, what should I do? A person who couldn’t die even if you cut off his head... does such a thing exist in this world?”

The living head said when it heard this:

“Because I am no longer human.”

Luke didn’t reply, in contrast he crossed his arms.

“...If you wouldn’t die if I cut off your head, should I use fire to burn you, or like how a vampire who appears in the stories is dealt with, use a wooden stake to stab through your heart?”

So the head said happily:

“Oh, amazing, you discovered that I’m a vampire?”

Luke still ignored it.

“...Ugh, these thoughts are too weird? People who don’t die after their heads are cut off shouldn’t exist. Furthermore things like vampires, they’re too unrealistic. This means...”

At this moment, he looked at the head on the floor and said:

“Your appearance now is some kind of illusion? We chopped off the fake head that you made with magic, slicing it, but we were only being played by you... does the reason why you are immortal lie here?”

The head heard that and said:

“...Oh my, it’s already discovered. How did you see through it so easily?”

Luke still showed an expression that he didn’t think that was right.

“Yes, you have been seen through. Although we defeated that huge snake, but Miller-senpai and Major General Froade haven’t appeared here, this is a very strange matter. From this, I can deduce that you have other illusionary bodies, engaging the both of them... your battle plan this time has too many loop holes.”

The head heard this, revealing an unhappy expression.

“Wa, you can say something like that? So I said I hated the guys by Rahel Miller’s side. They are strangely talented, being able to see through my magic in a while.”

But Luke shrugged.

“No, I haven’t seen through it. Because I still don’t know where your real body is? Which portion did you start using the illusion from...”

“Do you want to know?”

“Will you be willing to tell me?”

“Eh, uh, I think it is time I let you see my real self.”

“Is that so? Then please feel free.”

Luke said, so that head suddenly split open.

It split into something like black words, then disappeared into the ground as if melting.

Following that.

That guy appeared.

“My real self... is here.”

The voice came from behind Milk.

“Eh...”

Milk couldn’t turn back in time.

The man hugged Milk with his two hands.

Lear shouted when he saw this.

“Captain M, Milk?!”

Subsequently, Luke spoke last.

Using a cold expression that Milk had never see before to look at Milk, no, it was to look at the man behind Milk.

“...Your actions were within my predictions too.”

He said that.

His two hands moved. So, it wasn’t known at which point of time he had arranged it, he collected back the slim light threads that were surrounding Milk in one breath, surrounding the whole man.

Luke said:

“It’s over, Baron Lieutolu.”

The man was trapped by the threads, unable to move.

“...Wa, it can’t be... unless you lied to me? You said you didn’t know if the position that my real body in was fake?”

“...”

Luke didn’t reply, pulling on the threads directly.

Everything was over.

This time, the real body of the man that wasn't made from the illusion was sliced into thin pieces.

“...”

It should have been the case.

It should have been over at this point.

The man who was sliced into thin pieces didn't fall into pieces, in contrast he raised his hand.

“Ah?!”

Luke saw this, making a surprised noise for the first time.

But the man didn't stop. He should have been sliced to shreds, but the man said with a huge smile: "...You are quite talented, if... if I were only human, if I had not given up on being human, the situation would completely be in your grasp..."

As the man spoke, he made as if to carry Milk.

Luke ran forward when he saw that.

“St, stop!”

But, the man still continued. A blue white light started to light up from his hand. That was an extremely odd colour, it could be seen as an extremely dangerous thing just by taking one look at it.

But, Milk was unable to move, as if she were tied up tightly by something.

“No!” Luke ran with all his strength.

The man didn't stop, a smile that was as if he were really happy on his face.

Then, using a lazy voice that was like him to say:

“Arlierfolie, Arlierfolie..... Receive, the curse, Goddess of Fertility.”

He muttered.

In a moment—

The man's hand covered Milk's eyes.

“.....Ah!”

There was something.

Something made a sound, a feeling of something slipping into her mind.

Milk didn't know what that was, she only knew it was something that was very annoying.

In her mind.

That thing was wrapped in the depths of her mind.

She felt her knees weaken, she wasn't able to use any strength.

At the same time.

Luke punched that man.

Luke's fist landed on the man's face, but in the moment he touched it, the man's body disappeared like smoke.

He disappeared.

It was as if no one were there from the start.

Subsequently, Milk lost her support, her whole body looked as if she were about to collapse on the ground...

“Captain?!”

Luke hurried to support Milk, carrying her, looking at her face with a very worried expression.

“Are y, you fine?”

Milk wanted to reply him—it's alright, I'm fine, you don't have to show such a worried expression. She wanted to reply him like this, but...

“...”

She wasn't able to speak.

Luke saw that.

“...Damn it... what did you... to her... what did you do to her?!”

He raised his head, shouting to the empty night sky.

So, a voice that was like his, sounded from the darkness that shouldn't have anyone—

“.....Hey hey, it’s late at night, don’t shout so loudly. I didn’t harm her, she’ll be able to stand in a short while. But... I only told her, not to act according to your ideas. I only removed one of the gears... from the gears that the Mad Hero activated.”

The man said that.

Luke heard that.

“The mad one... is you!”

He shouted as if he were roaring.

But—

“...”

There was no response again.

After confirming this fact, Luke looked at Milk again.

“...Captain, are you alright?”

He asked that, but Milk was still unable to reply.

She only strangely felt that she wanted to sleep.

As if her consciousness was sinking into a deep swamp. It was slowly blurring.

In her blurry consciousness, Milk repeated what the man had said.

The Mad Demon.

The Mad Demon.

The gears that the Mad Hero had activated.

But, who was that mad demon?

Human experimentations.

The deaths of children.

The destruction of the Callaud family.

The strangely shaped army that Luke led.

Milk as a hostage.

Using Ryner.

Many things overlapped in a complex manner, the gears turned gulu gulu, gulu gulu.

They rotated ceaselessly, making people dizzy.

Ah, her consciousness was fading.

Her consciousness was fading.

Amidst her fading consciousness, Milk thought.

If she could still wake up again, go see him.

Next time do her best not to identify the wrong person, go and meet him.

Proceed to the place where that mad demon was.

Proceed to the centre of the darkness.

Proceed to Sion Astal's side.

So...

So, the peaceful times ended.



The peaceful times finally ended.

The world was mad.

The world contorted.

It was already unstoppable.

He knew it in the beginning.

He should have known it would turn out like that in the beginning.

But, but even so, he still shouted, I want to stop it.

But, it couldn't be stopped.

It completely couldn't be stopped.

No.

Don't be like that—he shouted.

But it couldn't be prevented.

It completely couldn't be prevented.

The world was mad, twisted.

He was unable to do anything.

Things had progressed to the stage that there was nothing they could do.

But, even so...

He said.

He said with an expression as if he wanted to cry—

Even so, at least a little...

Just a little bit more.

Can't you let me look at this happy dream for a while more?

He prayed like that.

That darkness prayed.

That brightness prayed.

That.....prayed.

That was a meaningless prayer.

A prayer that had no meaning at all.

It was only a sad, meaningless prayer.

But, that prayer had actualised.

The peaceful life had already clearly ended.

It was clearly at the start, everything had already ended.

But the fake peace still hadn't vanished.

Everyone had started to discover the strangeness in this, but why had that kind of fake peaceful life not disappear yet.

Just a little more.

Just a little more of the peaceful times.

Even if that was fake.

Even if that was an illusion that couldn't be saved.

Let me look at this happy dream for a while more...

He, said that.

But, this kind of desire was already...

Chapter 9: The last day

That day, Roland had fair weather.

It had had that kind of good weather for this while, without a single cloud in the sky.

It was like that every year.

There was little rainfall during this season.

Probably in a months' time it would enter the monsoon season, but there was nearly no rain now.

The temperature wasn't high or low, it was an extremely comfortable temperature.

It was a comfortable warmth that made people want to sleep. Ryner thought in his heart.

“...”

The location was in the office he normally worked in.

He threw the work that Sion had forcefully pushed to him on the table, hua~ he yawned, turning his neck, blinking his extremely tired eyes.

Then he leaned his back on the back of the chair.

“Hu.”

He sighed lightly, using his black eyes that were lax because of dense sleepiness to look around the office dazedly.

It was only a simple room with book shelves and a table.

Apart from Ryner, there were two other people in that room.

Like usual, Sion who was nearly killed by the large amount of documents on the table.

And Ferris who said earlier about something like preparing table cloth, tea set and dango set meals for the dango celebratory feast, but hugged her knees and fell asleep curled up in the corner of the room.

It was a familiar scene.

It was a scene that was really no different from normal.

He felt like he was seeing that same scene every day.

The seasons changed continuously, but the scene her didn't seem to change at all.

Ryner looked out of the window, then said:

“I say Sion.”

So, Sion still stared at the documents, using a distracted voice to reply:

“Eh~?”

“I say, I only discovered it suddenly now.”

“Uh?”

“When I returned to this country.”

“Eh.”

“...It's the same season as now.”

Sion heard that, raising his head with a slightly surprised expression.

Then like Ryner, he turned his gaze out of the window.

“...Eh? It's been that long?”

“It seems so.”

“A year?”

“Eh.”

Ryner nodded.

A year.

“...”

Yes, a year.

After returning to Roland, it had been more than a year.

At that moment, Ryner suddenly tried to remember the things that had occurred in this past year.

So, he could remember, as usual Sion forcefully pushed over a large pile of work, being forced to work overnight for ten days, nearly dying of that.

And as usual, being coerced into playing with Ferris, his head was nearly chopped off by her sword.

Falling into Sion's trap, fighting with the nobles in a degrading woman's outfit.

Falling into Ferris's trap, being embarrassed in a high class restaurant.

Falling into Sion's trap, running here and there because of seals that were forbidden, nearly losing his life.

Being involved in the ruckus about Ferris going on blind dates, for some reason, his head was nearly chopped off again.

Being forced to deal with the love letters that were written to Sion from females, almost losing his life.

For some reason, going to the onsens with Ferris, nearly being killed.

“...”

How should he say this?

The more he thought about it the stranger it got, why did it seem like he only have memories about nearly dying?

At this moment, Ryner half-opened his eyes, glaring steadily at Sion and Ferris.

“...Really, I have suffered from the dangerous bullying from you two demons, crying “Ah, please don't kill me!”, in the blink of an eye a year has actually passed...”

Sion laughed when he heard that.

“Hehe, it's been quite enriching right?”

“Be careful or I’ll kick you.”

“You always like to complain, actually you quite like working overnight...”

“There’s no such thiooooooooooooooooooooooooooooing!”

Ryner shouted, Sion was extremely gleeful.

“Oh dear, don’t be so shy. You can say it out in the open, after you started working under Sion Astal-sama, you’re able to see limitless light every day. Thank you, thank you so much, Sion-sama~”

“...Ah? I’m really going to kill you!”

Sion heard that, he still shrugged happily, then spoke to Ferris who was sleeping in the corner of the room: “Hey, Ferris, wake up, Ryner seemed to say he wanted to kill you...”

“Hey, waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaiiiit!”

Ryner shouted as he stood up, jumping towards Sion.

He frantically covered Sion’s mouth, then looked in Ferris’s direction, as he prayed in his heart—please, please don’t wake up.

But, that violent demon that was largely increasing the distance between the second place in the “World Troublesome” selection competition, unknowingly reaching the end of universe opened its eyes slightly!

In a moment.

It’s over... Ryner thought in his heart.

It was already too late.

Everything was over.

Things progressed as usual.

She opened her eyes, saying something like “Ah, why is the weather so good today? Ne, Ryner. Let me chop your head off, make it fly in the air happily~” or something strange like that, then wave her sword.

In this year,

So Ryner had already given up.

“...Ah, it’s over, I’m really dead...”

As he said that he shut his eyes, preparing to receive the painful impact.

But.

Ferris yawned and said:

“.....Uuuuuuuu~hauh, ahhhhh~ eh eh? So it’s Ryner... what is it? You called me?”

“...Uh?”

Ryner widened his eyes.

She, she didn’t hear it!

This person was sleep daze, she didn’t hear what Sion said?!

He picked, picked, picked back his life?!

At this moment, Ferris said:

“...I heard someone calling me...”

Ryner shook his head forcefully when he heard this, shaking his head enthusiastically.

“We di, didn’t call you! I definitely didn’t call you!”

“Uh? But I felt like someone called...”

“Y, you were dreaming? Weren’t you dreaming?”

Ferris tilted her head slightly, with a pair of sleepy eyes.

“...Dream? ...Ah, uh, am I dreaming... yes, it seems like the dango deity opened a dango kindergarten, and asked me to be the kindergarten teacher... uh. Ne, where are the kindergarten kids?”

Who knew! Ryner at least tolerated it, and did not jibe at her at this moment.

She seemed to be completely sleep dazed, and didn’t hear what Sion said.

Ryner couldn’t help but breathe out in relief.

If... If she heard it, the situation could become the worst scenario of Ryner’s head flying in the air, but this time it seemed that he could escape for once...

But, at this moment Sion who had his mouth covered pushed aside Ryner's hand.

"I say Ferris, Ryner said he wanted to make you..."

"Wuuuuuuaaaaaaaaawawawawa?!"

Ryner quickly covered Sion's mouth again, even locking his shoulder joints, forcefully pushing him on the table, making him unable to move. Ferris raised her eyes as if she couldn't understand to look at the duo sitting on the table.

"...What are the two of you doing?"

"N, n, nothing! Right? Isn't that so? Sion?"

"...Hu, hugugugugu."

Sion had his mouth covered by Ryner, his whole body was pressed on the table, but he still desperately tried to speak.

Ryner saw this, nodding hard.

"I said so? Sion said it's nothing?"

"Uh?"

"Alright alright, hurry up and sleep, when we were working overnight yesterday, didn't you always make a fuss, only letting up on it when you played until day break? Now you must feel like sleeping, right?"

"...Uh."

"F, furthermore, I'm not very clear, but you said the dango kindergarten? Aren't the kindergarten kids waiting for you?"

"Ah, yes~"

"Right? So, hurry and sleep?"

"Eh, I'm sleeping."

"Goodnight."

"Good..."

But, at that moment Ferris stopped speaking. Perhaps she wanted to sleep too much? She shut her eyes, and started to make very cute snoring noises.

That face was really too beautiful. Perfect, overwhelming beauty.

Like a goddess.

As long as she slept, she was like a goddess.

But, once she woke up, she immediately transformed into a demon that would destroy the world.

You want me to say that kind of things to this kind of extremely dangerous character?!

Ryner glared at Sion who was pressed on the table, saying softly:

“You, you, your evil personality has to have a limit?!”

Sion raised his head, pulling Ryner’s hand that was covering his mouth away, saying with a mischievous smile: “He he, my evil personality is the spot that I’m most proud about.”

“You demon!”

Ryner reprimanded, Sion still smiled widely, for some reason, he used a slightly sharp voice to say: “Heh heh heh, demon... demon.... To me, that is a compliment.”

“Uh, what character are you acting as?”

“Eh? Isn’t it the bad guys who usually say something like this?”

“Is that so?”

Sion tried to shrug his shoulders, but...

“Ah, Ryner, my arm is being twisted tightly by you, it hurts.”

He frowned and said.

Ryner heard that.

“Ah, sorry.”

After he apologised, he made Sion’s arm—twisted it even tighter.

“Wa, it hurts! You... It really hurts~?!”

Ryner laughed.

“Ah, sorry~ I wasn’t too clear, I twisted it harder...”

“Don’t mess aroooooooooooooooooooooound!”

Sion shouted in one of his rare fits, then—

“No, wait, Ryner, my shoulder is really going to be dislocated, stop.”

He said that with a voice as if he were going to cry.

Ryner heard that.

“No.”

He twisted it even harder.

“Uh?!”

In a moment, Sion gave out a cry that couldn’t be articulated, using an extremely tired voice to say: “...You, you... I’m tired from working overnight too, I can’t play this kind of intense games with you...”

But, Ryner interrupted him.

“How many times have I said this? And you still want me to work overnight every day, do this, do that.”

He twisted Sion’s arm hard, as if wanting to sweep clear the grudges he had accumulated.

“Wa, don’t, wuah, really, wait...”

But, he only spoke till there.

Ryner’s last twist, Sion slumped on the table, not moving as if he were dead.

“Eh? Hey, Sion?”

“...”

But, there was no reply.

“...Ah, that, Sion?”

“...”

“Eh eh eh? That, uh, I didn’t twist you that hard? Don’t tell me you really fainted from the pain...?”

But—

“...”

There was still no response.

“...Th, this, don’t tell me something has really happened?”

Ryner reduced his strength, in an instant!

“Idiot!”

The face of the demon that should have fainted recovered its smile.

Sion suddenly leapt up, throwing off Ryner’s hand, in return he tried to lock Ryner’s joints.

“You bastard, you were acting like I expected!”

Ryner immediately responded too.

Sion’s left hand tried to catch Ryner’s right hand, but Ryner waved it off, and tried to catch Sion’s hand again.

But, Sion deflected Ryner’s hand too, trying to grab Ryner’s collar, but Ryner waved it off again, attempting to lock the joints of Sion’s fingers.

The duo initiated an attack and defend fight in the narrow room on an even narrower table.

Sion deflected Ryner’s hand, retreating from the table, then using the chair behind him as a stepping board.

“Heh!”

He kicked hard. Ryner saw that—

“You used your leg to kick?”

He blocked the attack in a moment, then glared at Sion and spoke:

“Ah~ Isn’t this a little against the rules? You’re over doing it?”

But Sion didn’t even look apologetic.

“Against the rules? What rules does fighting have?”

Ryner was surprised when he heard that.

“Eh? Are we fighting?”

“Aren’t we?”

“Uh... Ah~ It’s fighting?”

“That’s what I said?”

“Eh, so? You’re saying I can use any measures?”

“Eh.”

“Eh~ But is this good? If I played for real, Sion doesn’t have a chance of winning?”

Sion laughed again when he heard that, then stared at Ryner with sharp eyes.

“How would you know if you don’t try?”

“How would I not know?”

“You wouldn’t know.”

“Uh, forget it...”

At this moment, Ryner smiled too, then—

“Since that’s so, then let me clean out my grudges... Heh!”

At the same time as he spoke, Ryner swung out his fist.

He swung straight at Sion’s face.

Sion was slower by two claps to react to this attack.

Sion completely couldn’t keep up with the reaction speed of Ryner who was playing for real.

I said so?! Ryner thought in his heart, you should have known not to fight with me.

As Ryner swung his face he looked at Sion’s face with half-lidded eyes.

He watched Sion’s expression which was unable to react to his movements.

Sion had a face of tiredness.

That was obvious. Because this guy had worked even more desperately than Ryner who had worked overnight for several days, who had buried himself in

work.

Because he was always carrying all the responsibility alone, attempting to shoulder the life and death of this country alone.

He was exactly the same as when Ryner met him.

He wasn't any different from the year ago.

This country had clearly had such a large change.

Yes, it was unbelievable, Roland was already stable.

The nobles were controlled.

The integration of Estabul was going very smoothly.

They had even stopped the neighbouring Imperial Nelpha that was restless just a while ago.

This world had indeed possibly entered the warring era because of the restlessness of Gastark Empire, but at least this country currently should be presiding in a peaceful state.

In this year, Sion had already pushed the country to this state.

Of course he would be tired.

He dealt with the problems that were piled up into mountains as if he were mad, forcing things that were not possible to be possible.

But, he still wasn't willing to rest.

The largest country in the southern continent, Roland Empire.

The king of this country had trampled on his body in such a way...

At this moment, Ryner's fist came before Sion.

But.

"Really."

Ryner's fist moved swiftly aside in the moment before it struck Sion's face, grabbing Sion's face, pushing him on the table again.

So, Sion said with a tired but happy expression:

“...Oh my, I was defeated in two or three blows.”

“So~o I said it before..”

“...Eh, you’re indeed amazing... As expected of the most amazing magician in Roland... I wasn’t even able to see your strike.”

“Because you’re tired.”

“I think even if I was energetic, I wouldn’t be able to see it.”

“There’s no such thing.”

“Is that so?”

“Who knows? Uh, we don’t need to discuss about this kind of thing... oh yes, eh~ why is it? Why did we have to fight?”

Ryner said, so Sion laughed.

“As compared to saying we fought, in truth Ryner suddenly said, “I can’t stand it alreaaaaaaady”, then pushed me down...”

“Hey.”

“Let’s not talk about this kind of jokes.”

“That’s right, don’t make this kind of jokes that makes me feel uncomfortable.”

Sion laughed again, it was a tired laugh.

Ryner was already impatient with this kind of expression from Sion.

“Forget it, go and sleep! You really are a little over-worked.”

“Eh, that’s right. If I don’t sleep for a bit, my body really wouldn’t be able to stand it.”

Sion nodded.

“Right?”

“Eh, then, our fight should be concluded?”

“Ah? You still want to continue? It was long...”

But, Sion interrupted him.

“It’s still early.”

Sion’s right hand made a swift movement.

His right hand made as if to hit Ryner’s face...

But.

“How can you hit me like that?”

Sion’s fist was too slow, in addition Ryner was sitting on him, he couldn’t even move.

A meaningless struggle.

Ryner watched Sion’s fist with half-lidded eyes, at the same time he leaned back slightly.

Normally speaking, Sion’s fist shouldn’t hit Ryner.

It really was a meaningless struggle.

A meaningless...

But, at this moment suddenly—

Sion smiled. But it wasn’t that kind of smile filled with tiredness like earlier, but it was a happy, mischievous smile.

“You lose, Ryner.”

He said, opening his fist.

When he saw the object in Sion’s hand, Ryner’s sleepy, dull eyes opened big for once.

“Eeeeeehhhhhhhhh?!”

He couldn’t help but shout, making as if to move back.

“You can’t escape.”

But Sion grabbed Ryner’s clothes, forcefully pulling him back, making Ryner unable to move.

“You, don’t joke...”

But, he didn’t manage to finish that.

Because an unbelievable thing had happened before his eyes.

Sion raised his fist high.

In his fist he was actually holding an ink bottle that was opened.

The black ink in the ink bottle followed the motion of Sion raising his fist high, splashing towards Ryner.

That ink was really too black, if it spilled on clothes, it would probably be unable to wash it off forever, if it splashed on the face, if it wasn't washed a few more times, it would probably be unable to be clean?

If this was something that happened on the battle ground, of course there wasn't a need to dodge, people wouldn't die if ink splashed on them. So, there wasn't any need to dodge.

But—

“You, are you an idiiiot!”

Ryner shouted as if he would die because the ink splashed on him.

And at the same time he shouted, the ink poured down from above his head.

It was really all dark.

Because the ink ran into his eyes, Ryner's left eye vision was all pitch black.

His clothes were all black too.

His face was probably be the same?

And Sion laughed loudly in the position of being squashed under Ryner.

Ryner saw that.

“...”

He was the most evil.

This guy was really too evil. Ryner thought in his heart.

In this period, Sion still hugged his stomach and laughed happily and said:

“...Ha, ah, h oho..... ah, it's really too tiring, just by laughing I feel that my chest really hurts... uh, then, it's counted as my win... we should sleep soon?”

Sion said that as if everything had ended.

It's really over, it's a good Happy Ending! He said that with a tone as if he were a good teenager.

But Ryner heard that.

“...”

He was speechless.

He remained in his position straddling Sion's body, standing on the table dazedly, grumbling.

“Eh? What is it, Ryner?” Sion said.

“...”

But, Ryner was still wordless.

He surveyed his surroundings wordlessly.

He turned his head around.

“What are you finding?”

Sion asked.

“.....”

But, he was still wordless.

At this moment, Ryner saw “something”.

Then he stared fixedly at that something and said:

“I say Sion.”

“Eh?”

“You said earlier you should sleep, right?”

“Eh.”

“But, you say that you should sleep, but after I go back, you will still continue working, right?”

So Sion kept silent for a while as if he were a little troubled, then said:

“Uh, I am only working for a while more?”

“Working overnight till day break, then continuing to work for ten hours again, normal people wouldn’t say that they’re working for a while.”

“Ugh.”

Sion groaned, Ryner ignored him, continuing:

“I have this kind of friend who wouldn’t rest properly at all, standing on my side, I would be ex~tremely worried.”

“Eh? You really are that concerned for me?”

Ryner nodded heard.

“Do you even need to say it? Who wouldn’t be concerned about their good friend?”

He said that.

Yes, worrying about his important friend, worrying from the bottom of his heart, he was so worried that he didn’t know what to do.

“I’m worried about you.”

Ryner’s face was serious.

Sion heard that, perhaps he should be touched?

“...How should I say this? Ryner. You have been saying that you are concerned for me since just now, I am truly happy, but, your voice is so dry that it sounds like an act, this is the only point that I mind...”

He said that with a trembling voice.

“...”

“A, and... I also mind that, you have not been looking at me since just now, but you have been staring at that red ink bottle... don’t, don’t tell me you are thinking...”

But Ryner only smiled faintly when he heard this.

Then he stared at Sion.

“No no, how can I be like that idiot king, and do something as childish as

that?"

He said.

Sion heard that, he still spoke with a trembling voice:

"Th, that's right?"

"Do you still need to say that. I have no such intentions, I am really worried for you. Ah, is my beloved friend Sion sleeping properly now? Did he rest properly? I am always this worried and worried, you should be able to understand my feelings?"

"...Uh uh uh..."

"Do you understand?"

"Uh uh uh."

"So, I thought of a good point, I thought of an extremely good way for you to sleep."

As Ryner spoke he picked up the red ink bottle at the corner of the table.

"You're still going to do iit!"

Sion shouted, attempting to escape from the able, but Ryner stepped on his chest with his foot, stopping him from escaping.

"You can't escape. If you escape, you're going to continue working like an idiot again. So, I have decided to make you sleep before me."

Ryner opened the cap as he spoke. Sion quickly said:

"I, I know, Ryner! It's my fault, calm down..."

But Ryner interrupted him.

"Now sleep foreeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeer!"

He made as if to press the red ink bottle that was open on Sion's face.

But!

Sion thought on the spot.

"Waaaaaaaaaaait there are important documents under me... I, I wouldn't

let you do thiiiiiiiiiiiiiiis!"

For the sake of protecting the documents, Sion put his face close to the red ink bottle, at the same time he hugged Ryner tightly.

Attempting to push Ryner down from the table.

"Wa, wait, don't come near me! The ink will splash... it's going to fall, it's going to fall!"

Ryner shouted, struggling to push Sion away, but Sion hugged him desperately, unmoving.

So.

"Uuuuuuuuuuuuwaaaaaaaaaaaaaahh!"

The two of them screamed at the same time, falling off the table.

No, as compared to saying that they fell down, it should be said that Ryner who was trying to escape and Sion who was clinging to him tightly, jumped off the table in that entangled appearance.

Ryner desperately wanted to adjust his position in mid-air, but he wasn't able to do so under Sion's obstruction.

If this continued, they would strike the ground head first, but because he was prevented by Sion, Ryner wasn't able to adjust his position.

"You are reaaaaaaaaally!"

Just at the moment Ryner was about to shout!

He discovered a most terrible matter.

It was really something that happened suddenly.

Suddenly, the entrance to hell opened in this narrow office.

Ryner saw it...

He saw the entrance to hell.

"...Ah, ah..."

Just by seeing that entrance, he was unable to say anything.

That kind of powerful fear existed in that place.

And, if this continued, it would definitely enter the entrance to that Hell.

It reached the hell that was snoring.

It reached that...

Above the head of that Ferris Eris...

In a moment.

Bang!

With that sound, Ryner and the others dropped on the ground.

At the same time.

“Ya?!”

A cute moan that Ryner had never heard before sounded in the room.

Ryner and Sion stood up rapidly, immediately jumping away from the scene, then turned back to look...

Ferris was already collapsed in the corner of the room.

Beside her, the dango set meal that she had happily wanted to take as breakfast for tomorrow, had been completely squashed.

“...”

“...”

Ryner and Sion opened their mouths speechlessly, and looked at each other.

But, the duo didn't say anything.

It was terrible.

No, this wasn't the problem of being terrible.

Because it had opened.

That had opened.

The door to Hell.

Ferris raised her head slowly.

Sion saw that.

“.....Ah, ah, uu~ah, Ryner, you are really something, using such a violent method to wake someone up, isn’t Ferris too pitiful?”

“Ugh, you are despicable...”

But, Sion interrupted him.

“I say Ferris, I did stop him, but Ryner said no matter what, he had to get rid of all the grudge he had accumulated in his heart...”

“Yooooouuuuuuuuuu!”

Sion ignored Ryner’s shout, continuing to worsen the relationship, using his usual, goody tone that made people angry just by hearing it to say!

“But, don’t be angry with Ryner. He has really been helping me out a lot with work. Perhaps because of this, he worked overnight for several days, causing him to create this kind of thing that troubles other people... Regarding this point, ne, I will take the responsibility of rebuking him... Ne, then we’ll stop at this for today. I’ll go take a shower, and go to sleep. So that’s that...”

Saying that, he started to step forward.

He took a step towards the exit of the room.

But.

Baaang bang!!

The heavy sounds of something that sounded like several things had repeatedly struck resounded throughout the present scene.

“...Uh!”

With a despairing groan, Sion collapsed on the spot.

At some point in time, Ferris was standing opposite him.

She was putting her sword back into its sheath.

“.....Ah, ah, ah...”

Ryner let out a cry that was unspoken.

Because, he nearly didn’t see her movements.

He thought that Ferris was just getting up, he didn't think that in the next instant, Sion's body was already twisted into a ㄵ shape.

Following that the sound had started. He clearly didn't see anything, but there was the sound of Sion being beaten up by the sword.

Sion died.

And subsequently...

"Eh~ The mischievous brats are always too mischievous."

Ferris said as she looked back.

The smile of an absolute beauty was before him.

It was completely different from the usual expressionless face, it was a smile that was too perfect.

Why would a beautiful person seem so beautiful just by smiling?

Ryner thought in his heart.

And then he thought, why was it so terrifying when Ferris smiled?

Ryner almost cried.

He felt that he was almost going to get a phobia of smiles.

Anyway, Ferris said happily:

"Ne, it's Ryner-chan's turn now right?"

Ryner heard that, taking a step back and said:

"Ah, ah, that, that that, I don't know what you're thinking, but, it's really not my fault this time?"

She still had a dazzling smile.

"Eh, is that so?"

"Ugh, ss, this time it is really the prank of Sion who has died at that side..."

"Eh, is that so?"

"Uh, eh, it, it's like that..."

"Eh, is that so?"

“No, that...”

“Eh, is that so?”

“.....Aaaauuuuuuhhh.”

“Eh, is that so?”

“Uuuuhhhh it can’t be... it’s over... or else, that, please be gentle. That, please don’t make it that painful for me...”

In a split second.

Baaang baaang!

“...Uh!”

Ryner made the same groan as Sion, collapsing there and then.

“Now you know how painful it was for the dango deity!”

But, at least Sion could sleep with this, I can sleep properly too, there’s nothing bad about that...

Ryner heard Ferris’s voice that was reprimanding them loudly, as he thought this, he gradually lost consciousness.



The next day.

It was still a day with good weather in Roland on that day.

Dusk, the sky that was stained red was cloudless.

It was this kind of season right now.

A season that made people have a severe lethargic feeling.

Ryner hadn’t opened his eyes for the whole day yesterday, he woke up in the office today morning, went to wash off the ink on his body, then continued

working.

Ten hours had passed since he started work.

He continued to rearrange the documents on the table.

And yawned huaah.

Twisting his neck, blinking his tired eyes ceaselessly.

Then leaned his back on the chair.

“Hu~”

He sighed lightly.

His movements were the same as yesterday.

The scene before him was the same as yesterday.

Sion who only slept for one night which was not enough to erase the tiredness completely, and still had a tired expression still completed his work with an extremely high efficiency rate.

In the corner of the room, Ferris held her dango in one hand, as she read the famous book named “Smudging the Maple Leaf’s Colour: The Picnic Gathering of the Mature Ladies”, a strange and suspicious novel, muttering “H, how can this...” or “liiidiot?!”, and her face was red.

Ugh, a scene like usual.

Ryner said when he saw that:

“There are too little changes?”

“...”

But—Sion didn’t even raise his head today, he swiftly moved his pen with much passion, burying himself in work.

Ryner shrugged when he saw that, turning to look at Ferris.

“I say Ferris. I’m a little thirsty, can you give me some tea to drink?”

He tried to raise this request, but Ferris too—

“.....This, this, what is this counted as... This means, Miss Sila and Baker

were secretly bringing up birds together?!"

"...What's so surprising about this point?!"

Ryner grumbled about her, but his voice didn't even travel into the ears of Ferris who was completely engrossed in reading the novel.

"...What is this? Isn't anyone willing to pay attention to me?"

"..."

"..."

There was still no response.

"Ugh. Forget about it, it's quite peaceful like this."

Saying that he stood up, walked to Ferris's side, and picked up the tea cup to drink from it.

He surveyed the entire room as he drank.

This room was extremely familiar to him, the present him even knew what kind of spots there were on which wall.

That was obvious. Because he was forced to stay here and work overnight every day for this past year.

One year.

"...One year?"

Time had passed so quickly. Ryner thought in his mind.

When people were doing some boring things, even a second could feel as long as several hours, but, looking back on this past year, it really felt as if it had passed in the blink of an eye.

When he came back to himself, unknowingly, a year had already passed by.

What did this mean?

This period of time had surprisingly made him feel happy?

"How can that be?"

Ryner muttered, revealing a bitter smile.

He was ordered around by Sion that idiot every day, being a mule, and being bullied by Ferris that fool for nearly a year, how can this kind of life be something happy? Ryner withheld his laughter.

Then he looked at the two of them.

“.....Aren’t I right?”

He said that as if testing them, but the two people still carried on with their own tasks, and didn’t reply.

Ryner saw that, and felt a little lonely.

“Haha.”

He laughed lightly.

Because that kind of feeling was truly incomprehensible.

In the past.

In the distant past.

There wasn’t anyone by his side. Having no one by his side to him, it was something to be expected, it wasn’t counted as anything much.

Even if he wanted to say something, he would only be cursed as a monster that spoke nonsense.

Even he himself felt that he was a monster.

He gave up on everything.

But.

But now that everyone didn’t take notice of him, he actually felt a little lonely.

“...Hahaha.”

Ryner laughed again.

He finished drinking the tea in a go, then returned to the desk.

Picking up the pen, continuing to work.

Continuing to do those things that he felt extremely annoying.

He continued by himself to do those kind of troublesome things that he

definitely wouldn't do.

What was that for?

Who was it for?

The answer was undeniable.

It was for himself.

Because he had found a place to stay.

This country.

This Roland.

This office.

By the side of this king who had a terrible personality and this extremely annoying woman, this was the place that he was stopping at.

Because he wanted to stay in this place, for some unknown reason, he would strangely think of doing something for the world.

Because he wanted to stay in this place, for some unknown reason, he would strangely think of doing something for someone.

Because he wanted to stay in this place, for some unknown reason, he would strangely think of doing something for himself.

Just by staying in this place.

“...”

Because just by staying in this place, for some unknown reason, a year had passed unknowingly like that.

Because he had a kind of feeling, this peaceful times would pass by quickly like light.

So.

“...”

At this moment, suddenly.

“I, it's, it's oveeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeer!”

Sion shouted.

Ryner heard that.

“Ah?”

He looked at Sion.

So Sion picked up the pile of documents, saying with a disbelieving expression:

“I, I’ve finished it, hey!”

Ryner heard that and asked:

“What do you mean? Which case have you finished? Seeing how happy you are, don’t tell me it’s the problem of the appeals about Pangram’s promotion, you’ve found an ideal solution for that?”

The appeal of promotion that the noble called Pangram that Ryner was speaking about, was the hardest problem that he had encountered recently.

Sion’s influence was expanding continuously, and the power of the nobles were slowly being reduced and controlled, a part of the nobles whose dissatisfaction had exploded and actually sent this blackmail note: “if you continue to bully the nobles, the nobles will all commit suicide!” something depressing, and made people want to yell at them: “nonsense!”

But, if it was ignored, it would probably create the doubt that the king was looking down on the nobles, and trigger even stronger dissatisfaction, so there was a need for them to come up with a suitable reassurance, and to what degree they should do it... they needed to handle this in a thorough but delicate way, just like facing a group of stubborn children.

“That problem has been solved?”

Ryner asked. But Sion shook his head.

“No.”

“Eh? Then what is it? The problem of enforcing the guard close to the country’s borders...”

Sion still shook his head.

“No.”

“Then what is it?”

“.....II.”

Sion opened his mouth with a soft voice that made it hard for Ryner to hear him.

Ryner frowned when he heard that.

“Ah? Don’t continue acting, what is over?”

Sion heard that, turning to look at him.

“...It’s all completed.”

“Ah?”

“Everything! The things that need to be handled urgently are almost all done.”

“Eh, eh, this means...”

Sion smiled widely when he heard that.

“There’s no work to be done for nearly a week.”

Ryner heard that.

“...Eh, eh, it can’t be?”

“Really.”

“Eeeeeeeeehhhhhhh, but, but, can’t you just be saying that, but actually in the next second you say it’s a lie—from today onwards we need to work overnight for ten days straight...”

“No no, it’s real this time, the things that need to be done on the internal governing side are almost all...”

“Completed?”

“Eh.”

“Really?”

“Really.”

Sion used Ryner's tone to say that, then nodded.

But, Ryner still didn't dare to believe it.

A year ago, Sion had raised all the problems that Roland currently faced, the amount was so much that it was unbelievable.

If the speed in handling this was slightly delayed, the country might have the problem of collapsing, it were so large types that it couldn't help but make people suspect that it was unlimited.

So, Sion would work through the day and night.

Even Ryner had been dragged in.

But.

"It, it's over?"

"Eh, it's over. This country... is completely stabilised."

Sion said that, Ryner heard that...

"Then this means, this means, my work too..."

So, Sion happily smiled. He still had some signs of tiredness on his face, but he laughed happily.

"You can rest for about a month."

"It can't beeeeeeee?"

"Really."

"It can't beeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

Sion saw that Ryner had this kind of reaction, he couldn't help but smile bitterly, then said:

"It's true. This time round I really have to thank you. Thanks to you, you have helped me out a lot. From today onwards you don't have to follow such an unreasonable work schedule... But, the work of negotiating with other countries will probably increase again."

He said that.

Ryner was still feeling disbelief.

“Eh? Then, that, over, overtime... eh, I can sleep whenever I want to... Ah, that, is that true?”

He sank completely into panic.

Because in this past year, he was always forced by someone who had something wrong with his brain to work frantically according to the plan that he had drawn out.

And this kind of life had suddenly ended.

There was actually nothing to do.

How, how can that be?

“Is there something so joyful as this?”

Sion laughed again when he heard that.

“Hahaha, I’m surprised too, I didn’t think that there really would be such a day...”

Saying that he laughed again, then breathed out, then said:

“Ryner.”

“Eh?”

“Thank you.”

“You’ve said that a few times.”

“Haha.”

Sion laughed lightly, then stretched out wide.

“Then—”

Saying that, he stood up.

“I’m leaving this place for a while, I will give some orders on the progress of this country from today onwards, what are you planning to do?”

Being asked that by Sion, Ryner stared at the documents on his table.

“But, I’m left with two...”

But, Sion interrupted him.

“That doesn’t matter, I can handle it. So, you can rest?”

“It can’t be?”

“I said it was true, haven’t I always been telling you that?”

Sion laughed, although there was some signs of tiredness in his expression.

Ryner saw that and said:

“There’s no need, I can do the last two cases...”

“It’s doesn’t matter, it’s fine. I’ll go discuss with Calne and the others, we’ll slow down the pace from today onwards, you don’t have to be worried about me.”

“Is that so?”

“Eh.”

“That... Having said so much, you won’t say again, actually this is a trap, you have to work overtime for ten days...”

“You’re saying the same thing as just now... but, there really isn’t.”

“Really... then, eh. I should go back?”

“Yes, eat something good, and go back and rest well.”

Sion’s words made Ryner stare at him in suspicion with a slightly unhappy feeling.

“You, you say that you want me to rest properly, it sounds like you have some sort of plan again.”

“Ah, or else, from now on, I’ll come up with a plan that makes people feel annoying...”

“I don’t want that kind of troublesome matter!”

Saying that, Ryner stood up too.

It seemed like work had really ended.

After Ryner arranged the documents on his hands, and placed them on the corner of the table.

“Then, I’m going back.”

Sion nodded when he heard that, then took out a pouch.

“Do you have money for food?”

“What kind of meddling old lady are you?”

“Hahaha, do you have it or not?”

“No.”

“Do you need money?”

“Yes.”

“Then take it.”

Sion took out a few gold coins from his pouch, throwing them towards Ryner, Ryner caught them in time, after Sion confirmed that he said: “Take that money, and have a date with Ferris?”

“...No, if possible, I hope that I can spend the day with the condition that Ferris is not around, to eat well, and have an afternoon nap.”

Ryner frowned unhappily, looking at the corner of the room.

She was still looking at the novel intently, there was no response to their conversation.

Ryner nodded again when he saw that.

“I say Ferris also said that she didn’t want to eat with me.”

But, Sion revealed a smile that was as usual harbouring ill intentions.

“The relationship between the two of you is clearly good.”

“People who get along well with each other wouldn’t use a sword to beat people, there are people who are beaten until they cry.”

“Ugh, but, there are people who like this kind of game...”

“Enough, get away with you.”

Ryner said with an impatient tone, Sion for some reason, actually revealed a hurt expression.

“Once, once you had money you immediately used that attitude... Speaking of which, you are only looking at my financial assets, right?!”

Ryner heard that and said:

“Go and die!”

“Ahaha! Then I wouldn’t interrupt the secret meeting of you two, I’m going.”

“I say someone like you, why do you feel reluctant if you don’t say this kind of irritating words?”

Sion heard that, laughed:

“Then we’ll meet tomorrow.”

Saying that he left the room.

Ryner nodded in reply.

“Eh.”

Sion left.

After Ryner confirmed that—

“...”

He sat back on the chair again.

There were only the two of them Ferris and Ryner left in the room.

But, because Ferris was looking intently at the novel, so the room seemed very quiet.

“...Ugh.”

Ryner murmured softly, then he arranged the documents on the table again, arranging the pens scattered on the table and so on, keeping them in the drawers.

Then again—

“.....Ugh.”

There was nothing that he could do.

The work was really completed.

There wasn't anything to do.

So.

".....Ah~ Ferris?"

Ryner said, so he didn't know why, this time she was different from the previous time, immediately raised her head.

"What?"

She asked.

Ryner heard that.

"Do you have any plans?"

"Eh?"

"I've gotten the money."

"Uh."

"There's no choice, let's eat together?"

So she placed the book to one side, then stared at Ryner suspiciously.

She used her clear blue eyes, as if wanting to see through Ryner to stare suspiciously at him.

Ryner saw that, and asked again:

"Do you have any plans?"

So Ferris said:

"That king whose personality is the worse and likes to bully people, couldn't have given you money, then told you to go home to have an afternoon nap?"

She said that.

Ryner heard that.

"It couldn't be?"

He nodded and said.

Yes. Things were obviously too strange. Thinking back on this past year, after this kind of progression, there would always be a bullying trap that Sion had

directed, that was so detailed that it was nearly impossibly waiting.

Ryner stared at the golden coins that Sion had given him suspiciously.

“He said, take this money and go on a date.”

Ferris revealed a slightly nervous expression and said:

“That means, this represents that, if we go on a date, our lives will end.”

“Probably... It’s clear, this is a trap?”

But.

“No... no, wait, Ryner, Sion wants us to go on a date, he countered and deliberately not let eat together that’s why he said that deliberately?”

“Ah, that makes sense, there is that kind of possibility. Is there a trap that would be easier to push forward if we don’t eat together? Ah~ There’s a possibility.”

“I said so right?”

“Eh, ah, then what should we do? Eat together? Or not eat together?”

“Uh? Ugh~”

Ferris crossed her arms and thought.

But, Ryner looked at the door that Sion had left through and said:

“...Do you think it’s true?”

So Ferris looked at him again.

“What?”

“The thing about work, do you think it has really ended?”

“Probably a fifth of it?”

“Not half?”

“...Ugh, I’ve never really come into contact with work, so I’m not sure, what do you think?”

Ferris asked, Ryner crossed his arms and thought too.

“Eh~ This, things lately actually have been...progressing smoothly. This

country has already changed... there isn't any problem that needs to be solved urgently, and it wasn't as if there was no possibility of solving the troublesome problems... but, he is Sion?"

Ryner said that.

"Uh. Because he is Sion."

Ferris nodded as if she could understand that.

Yes, the other party was Sion.

He was that work idiot king, Sion idiot Astal.

He was Sion moron Astal who would go and find new work and work as if he were mad, even if the work had ended.

And that kind of person actually said:

"There's no work to be done, go have a meal, then go home and rest properly."

Speaking of which this was obviously...

"It's a trap?"

Ryner said, Ferris nodded her head too and said:

"It's a trap."

The two had a conclusion.

Then Ryner asked:

"Then, what should we do?"

"Uuuuuuuuh."

"Really, why is that person's personality so bad?"

"Uh, birds of the same feather flock together. It was your bad personality that attracted that person?"

"Why are you pushing the responsibility to me suddenly again?"

"Do I need to say it? The things or disasters that happen in this world, eight hundred and twenty percent is because of you."

“Eh? Is that so?”

“Have you repented on it?”

“Uh—”

“Unless you repent on it, or else you’re not allowed to go home today!”

“.....Ah.....That, ah~ we seem to be slowly getting off topic, let’s return to the original topic...”

Ryner said with a tired voice and half-lidded eyes.

“Then, what do we do? Eat together? Or banish this thought?”

“Uh, I want to eat curry today.”

“Eh? But I want to eat burgers.”

“Idiot, we have to eat curry today.”

“.....Ah, forget it...”

Ryner stood up.

In the end, they had seemed to decide to eat together.

He put the gold coins into his pocket, walking forward.

Opening the door, confirmed that Ferris had already walked forward first.

“...Ah, Ferris.”

“Eh?”

“Do you know any stores that sell curry burgers?”

He said as he switched off all the lights in the room.



Ryner and the others left the office.

Walking out of the office, to the left was the direction of the stairway that led to the lower levels of the castle.

But, they turned to the right.

Not far ahead of the corridor, in a place that was curved more to the right.

“...”

Sion knelt on the ground.

His head felt like it was splitting open.

His chest ached so much as if it were tearing apart.

He couldn't make any sound.

He couldn't say anything.

Only the gears in his body were turning.

Only the contract that was made with curses was turning.

Only that mad flesh that was not what humans should have was turning.

“.....Ha.....Ah.....Ah!”

He felt disgusted.

There was a strong nauseous feeling that something in his body was almost jumping out.

But, he was already not vomiting blood.

Because nearly everything, all the cells in his body were eroded.

Because he was starting to synchronise with that.

The time of the ending was already approaching.

The time to make the choice was already approaching.

It had been three years since he had made the contract.

It had been over one year since that person, Ryner returned.

That was a long period.

An extremely long period.

Carrying the pain and going through it, that was a long period of time that made him almost go mad.

But, why did it feel like time passed by in an instant?

“...”

Sion revealed a smile slightly.

It was really in a blink of an eye.

Ryner had come back.

Ferris had come back.

“...”

There was only... laughter.

Forgetting the pain, forgetting the suffering, only the laughter.

Thanks to them, he was always in the midst of laughing.

“.....Ha, haha, hahaha...”

And, he had a dream.

He had an illusionary dream.

He thought that this dream would continue on.

He thought that this fake peace would always continue.

Seeing the same scene every day.

Although it was slow, but it passed by very quickly.

Give me a little more.

Give me a little more of this peaceful time.

Because I'm willing to take on this kind of pain.

Because I am willing to bear all of this pain that is almost making me mad.

So, let me have a longer look at this fake dream.

“.....I had a foolish dream...”

Sion said with an expression as if he were about to cry.

The fake stability clearly couldn't continue.

The illusionary dream clearly couldn't continue.

“.....Am I already at the end point?”

Sion said.

So—

“Eh.”

A voice responded.

From the empty space.

“...It is the end point.”

The voice replied, it was a clear voice.

Sion heard that, tolerating the body that was nearly destroyed by the pain, raising his head.

“...I...Am I wrong? Lucile?”

“...The hands of the **Hero** wouldn't do anything wrong.”

Lucile said.

The hands of the **Hero** wouldn't do anything wrong.

The Hero.

The Hero...

“Haha.”

He laughed dryly.

The Hero.

This was the **Hero**?

“...He's only a monster.”

“...”

Lucile didn't reply.

Sion leaned back on the wall of the corridor, collapsed on the ground, as if a doll that had lost its soul, with a dream like expression, staring dazedly at the air.

“...”

He thought.

He thought that everything was different.

Sion thought like this.

Everything was different.

Body.

Soul.

World.

Dream.

Hope.

Everything was different.

And nothing had turned out the way he had thought.

Initially he should have chosen the best path to take.

He should have chosen the best path with the least sacrifices, most effectiveness.

But.

“...Nothing. What I wanted, I didn't get any of it...”

Sion raised his hand slowly.

His hand. His hand that had a light, sparkling gold light.

The curse flowed under his skin.

The sacred curse of the Mad Hero Monster.

It was clear, that was no longer a human's hand.

It was no longer a human's hand.

These hands couldn't touch Ryner and the others anymore.

"..."

But, he... didn't regret it.

The reason why he made this choice, was because he felt that there was a need to.

Because he felt that this was the only path that could be taken.

Because only this path.

The world was twisted.

The world was mad.

Only the darkness continued to swell continuously.

So.

So, he had to stop it.

He had to stop the power of the darkness.

So, Sion chose that.

He chose this road, there was a reason that existed that even if he had to throw aside his own life he wouldn't hesitate.

There was a reason that existed that even if he had to sell out his friend's soul he wouldn't hesitate to do so.

So he didn't regret it.

But.

"..."

But, Ryner smiled, Ferris smiled too.

His resolve was wavering.

His resolve was wavering, he wanted to have more... have a little more of that dream.

Because, they really laughed like fools.

They laughed because of trivial things.

Ferris threw the work to one side because it was troublesome, happily talking about dangos.

Fighting, shouting at each other, but in the end they laughed together.

The world that you built isn't an illusion. – That person had said that.

“...”

In reality.

In reality it was an illusion.

Everything was a lie, everything was filled with despair.

I even sold out your life.

With my power—

I can't even save a single person.

But that person said, *you've done enough.*

You've worked hard...

So.

So, I want to have more of this dream.

“...”

At this point, Sion stopped thinking, using his fingers to touch his face.

He wiped off those meaningless tears on his cheeks.

Even the colour of the tears were no longer that of a human.

There was no way to step on the brakes.

The peaceful life was ending soon.

The time had come.

The time of the contract.

The time to go forward.

So, he was forced to make a choice.

That was the worse choice.

Choose his best friend?

Or, choose the world?

Sion gripped his hand tightly.

“...”

Friend?

World?

Friend?

World?

He had to make a choice.

He had to make a choice.

Because, he was the one to choose.

Because—

Because it has always been like that.

He tightened his fist.

As if wanting to crush his tears that flowed out.

As if wanting to crush his own heart.

He tightened his fist hard, hard, as if wanting to crush his scream!

“...Ne, save the world.”

He had to make a choice.

He had to make a decision.

He cried, but he still had to choose.

Choose the side that he thought was more correct.

Choose the side that he thought would have less sacrifices.

Choose the side that could save more lives.

So, he chose the world, giving up on his friend’s soul.

That side should be painful.

It probably would be excruciating.

But, he still chose.

But.

But.

“I wouldn’t let you have your way.”

Suddenly the voice spoke.

But, it wasn’t a voice that actually spoke.

It wasn’t Lucile’s voice too.

It was a voice that he was very familiar with.

It was really an extremely familiar voice.

It was his own voice.

The voice in his heart.

The voice of the other him.

His own voice of himself that was weak since birth, that had been eroded by the Sword.

That voice said:

“I wouldn’t let you do as you like.”

“...Haha, what can the fake thing that’s about to disappear do?”

“Nonsense, the fake thing is you.”

“It’s you.”

“It’s you.”

The same voice continued with the boring reply.

It was a really meaningless quarrel.

“...”

Sion narrowed his eyes.

In actual fact, the both of them were fake. It was only that the real self had been split into two, in the end they still had to form one.

The problem laid in, which side would gain the control in the end.

But—

“...Anyway you are going to lose.”

Sion said that.

“I...I don’t think I will lose.”

His other self said that.

Sion heard that.

“...Heh, hehehe...”

“What’s funny about that!!”

His spirit shouted.

But even so.

“...Hehe,ahaha,ahahahahahaha!”

Sion laughed.

Sion laughed.

Laughing as if he had gone mad.

Laughing with a voice that was nearly crying out.

So his spirit shouted again.

“I asked you what’s so funny!”

Sion heard this shout.

“Just with your power that only knows how to escape... you can’t win me.”

He said that.

But, his spirit shouted with a strong but determined tone:

“The one escaping is you!”

“It’s you.”

“It’s you! You are using saving the world as an excuse, using choosing the correct path as an excuse, you sold out Ryner...”

“Shut up!”

“The one who should shut up is you! I’m different from you. I didn’t give up on Ryner, I want to save that person...”

“Shut up shut up shut up! Don’t say such meaningless stuff! You can’t save that person! You who are escaping from choosing, escaping from fear, escaping from pain can’t do anything! I made the decision! I’m going forward! I wouldn’t let you get in my way!”

“I definitely wouldn’t let you do that! I will save Ryner...”

“You can’t save Ryner!”

“I can.”

“No! Since you say that, then do it for me to see! If you say you can save him, then let me see it! Let me see how are you going to save Ryner from the darkness. Anyway you can’t do it. You can’t save Ryner. If you can do it... If you can do it, I would have done it a long time ago!!”

Sion shouted, beating his chest.

Thumping his chest hard, his power was so much that he nearly destroyed himself.

His tears flowed out again.

He had clearly made up his mind.

He had clearly made the decision.

His tears overflowed, as if wanting to destroy the decision that he had made...

So—

“Even so, I still want to save Ryner. The one who will disappear is you.”

The other him said with a low and delicate voice.

Sion heard that as his tears flowed out.

“.....Can that be done?”

“Yes.”

“...Liar.”

“Wait and see.”

“...You’re lying, you can’t do it, you... we... how can we kill that person...”

But his spirit said:

“It can be done, I will kill Ryner, and save him before he falls into the deeper layers of darkness. You only need to sleep. I... I will end everything.”

Sion heard that.

His spirit heard that.

“...”

He was silent.

He wanted to cry.

Anyway...

Anyway no matter which side he chose, he would definitely regret it.

He thought.

So, the voice spoke again.

But, that was another voice.

Lucile's voice.

He said with a joyful voice:

"Ah, it's almost time."

He said that.

"It's almost time, it's almost time."

He said that.

"You've changed. You've become my real master. Become the person that will save the world... Let's go."

He said that.

"Ne, which side will win?"

Sion raised his head when he heard that.

"..."

A sad smile still on his face.

Chapter 10: Friend

It was dusk.

In the streets of the city.

It was strangely chilly.

“Eh?”

Ryner said softly.

“...Eh? Once the sky darkens, it will be a little cold?”

He rubbed his arms and said, Ferris who was at one side said:

“Uh, because the rainy season is approaching.”

“Eh~ Shouldn’t it be some time before the rainy season comes?”

Ryner said that, and stopped momentarily. Because he felt cold water drops fall onto his face.

He raised his head to look at the sky.

At some point in time the sky that had been covered with clouds seemed black.

“Eh... the weather was clearly so good in the day...Is it going to rain?”

Ferris raised her head to look at the sky.

“It will.”

“By the looks of the clouds, it probably wouldn’t be a light shower?”

“Uh. But it’s fine? If it rains, you can strip and use your clothes as an umbrella...”

“Wait~ With such cold weather, stripping will cause me to get a cold.”

“It’s fine.”

“Yes.”

“No.”

“...Uh, it wouldn’t be a problem for you...”

Ryner said despairingly, then raised his face to the sky again.

A drizzle had started.

“...Summoning you is annoying, the rainy season is so cold, I hate the rainy season.”

Ryner said, Ferris turned her head to look at him.

“Uh. Is it because of that? You mean to say, being naked during the rainy season, it would be too cold to attack women during the late night, so you don’t like it?”

She actually said that.

Ryner heard, looking at Ferris with half-lidded eyes.

“...I say you... ever since I came to know you, the things you’ve said have never changed.”

“Uh, if you could become a proper person earlier, I wouldn’t have to advise you so much...”

“Then I’m really sorry about that.”

“Eh, you’re lucky to have a companion who can give you such advice, you should be grateful.”

“Yes, yes, I am really too blessed.”

Ryner vaguely replied the same conversation as usual, continuing to look at the sky.

The downpour was slowly becoming heavier.

“...It looks like it isn’t the time to be saying nonsense. Ne, are we almost reaching that delicious curry restaurant you were talking about?”

Ferris nodded.

“Uh, it should be around here...”

Saying that, she turned her head to look around, then tilted her head in suspicion.

“Strange, the map clearly said that it was here.”

“Ah? Map? You’ve never been to that curry restaurant?”

“Eh. It’s like that, that store was recommended in the book that I bought from the book store yesterday.”

“Oh? A restaurant recommended in a book? That means it should be looked forward to?”

So Ferris for some reason, actually raised her chest as if she were proud.

“Hehe, and it’s the store listed first in the rankings!”

“Really?!”

“Yes.”

“Th, then, there should be many delicious dishes?”

“Uh, the flavour is rich and yummy... the book wrote that.”

“Oh oh oh, I seem to feel that curry is more delicious than burgers.”

Ryner’s mind was really all filled with curry.

Yes, he didn’t seem to have eaten curry in these few weeks.

No, two months ago after the karedon had been removed from the menu of that bento store, he had never eaten curry since then.

Oh, has it already been two months?

He suddenly felt like he wanted to eat curry, and he wanted to eat the curry cooked by a shop that sold curry...

“Ah, hurry, hurry and find that restaurant, I’m hungry.”

Ryner said. Ferris nodded, then looked around again.

“...Uh. I think it should be around here.”

“Are you lost?”

“Uh?”

“Ah, forget it, where’s the map? Did you bring a cutting of the map?”

Ryner asked, Ferris looked at him.

“No, I brought the whole book along.”

“So you brought it? Then let me see it, I’ll help to search for it.”

Ferris nodded and took out a small book, passing it to Ryner.

Ryner saw that.

“Eh? It’s really a book? I thought it would be a magazine or something...”

He said as he accepted the book it was really a small pocket-sized book.

The title of the book was written like this:

“The Decisive Key Factor! Desserts and Dango Store Rankings!”

“...”

Ryner looked at the words.

He looked and looked...

“Hey, this has no relation to cuuuuuuuuuuurry!”

That was a shout from the depths of his soul.

Because, his mind was already filled with curry.

His mouth and stomach had prepared themselves for curry.

But, but.

“Th, then is that what you mean? The store we’re going to now is not one that is famous for its curry, but a curry restaurant that only has desserts and dangos?”

So Ferris replied simply:

“Curry is only an add-on.”

“Dangos should be the add-ooooooooooooooooooooon!”

That was another shout from the depths of his soul.

Ryner said with a voice that was almost crying:

“Liar, my mind is already filled with curry... Ah, forget it, as long as I can eat curry, even if it is only normal curry...”

“What about burgers?”

“I forgot about it a long time ago.”

“Do you use this kind of method to forget about the women that you attacked before?”

“What and what...”

As they squabbled, the downpour became heavier and heavier, after Ryner sighed lightly and said:

“Forget it. Now tell me the page number of the mysterious store that serves curry as well in the publication?”

So Ferris nodded and said:

“Uh, but before that, lend me your clothes as an umbrella...”

“I’ll kill you... eh? Ah? You really want me to strip? That can’t be? Hey...”

“Heh heh heh heh~ Resisting it is useless, ojou-chan.”

“Who is a young lady...”

But, it was in that moment.

The rain really came down hard.

Lightning flashed through the sky, thunder boomed in the distance.

“Hey, Ferris, this isn’t the time to be joking.”

“Uh, eh.”

“Which page is it?”

“Page twenty five.”

“OK.”

Saying that, Ryner quickly flipped the pages. He looked at the map in the corner of the right page, confirming its location, then looked around.

The store seemed to be the store behind him, Ryner turned back to look.

There was a store there.

A small, dark store.

It should be said that it was a store with no lights at all. Because it was lighted up, so they didn't discover its existence.

And the sign hanging in front of the store was written like this: "Curry Specialty Store: On Rest Day Today".

"It's not open today!"

"Uh, it seems like it."

"Then what should we do?"

"Go to the restaurant that we go to usually?"

"In the end we're still going to that restaurant! Ah, forget it. At least there's curry there... I want curry sauce burger."

Ryner said and started to run, Ferris followed and ran forward too.

So, the two of them proceeded like that to the restaurant that they usually went to.



The location returned to the city in Roland.

Claugh Klom opened the door.

He peered into the interior of the room.

"Hey~ Sion, are you here? I'm here~"

Saying that, he walked into the room. Switched on the lights. But, there wasn't any presence of a person.

"He's not here?"

Claugh looked around.

The room wasn't any different from the past. There were documents all around, there weren't any luxurious items, it was a very disappointing room.

Claugh looked at the room.

"Really, calling someone over, but not being around, what is this?"

Just as he muttered to himself.

"Eh, Claugh-senpai. Was Claugh-senpai called over too?"

Claugh turned back when he heard that.

So, he saw a man who had golden hair, and had a face like a youth, Calne.

He looked at Calne.

"You were called over too?"

"Yes, there seemed to be something urgent..."

"Then, where's Sion?"

"Eh? He's not here?"

"You can see it just by looking?"

Claugh said, Calne peered into the room too.

"It's true, he's not here."

"I said that?"

"Eh, but, he told me to come here at nine o'clock..."

"Me too."

"Sion-san is a person who will definitely stick to the time of the appointment?"

"Eh."

“Then, why is he not here?”

Claugh heard that, and shrugged.

“How would I know? Could he have gone to the toilet?”

“Ah, could it be because he had diarrhoea, he can’t come out of the toilet, so he’s late~?”

“Yes yes.”

But Calne laughed softly.

“What is that? He’s not like Claugh-senpai.”

“Ah? What did you say?”

Calne laughed in amusement, as he walked into the room.

He looked around, then placed his hand on the door inside the office, connecting to the simple sleep quarters.

“In actuality, Sion-san is playing around with his lover, so he wasn’t able to come in time!”

As he spoke nonsensical things, he pushed the door open at the same time.

But.

“...”

Sion was not inside too.

There was only a bed that was arranged neatly and cleanly inside the dark room.

Actually if he were in the adjacent room, they would have felt his presence from the start.

Claugh saw that and said:

“He’s not there.”

“I don’t see him.”

Calne nodded, closing the door to the bedroom.

In the end, Sion seemed to be not in this room.

Claugh looked around, but there wasn't any place that they could search.

He said:

"He's not around."

"He's not here."

"...Ne, about what you said earlier..."

"Eh? What I said earlier?"

Calne looked at Claugh.

Claugh nodded.

"The nonsensical thing you were saying, I'm not very clear about it... Has Sion had a lover recently?"

So Calne revealed a "ah, you're referring to this?" expression.

"This..."

He tilted his head and said.

Claugh saw that and said:

"Ah? Since you don't know, why did you said that he had something going on with his lover?"

"Eh? Because if a man is only late in coming to work, the only reason that I can think of is that he's playing around with a woman or something like that..."

"I think only you would think of that?"

"Really? Claugh-senpai only needs to go out with Noa-san, so he always... Ah, I'll shut up I'll shut up. So, please put that thick dictionary back on the table..."

But, Claugh ignored him, and threw that dictionary over hard.

"Wa!"

Calne screamed and dodged, as he dodged, his left hand caught that dictionary.

"...Ah, how dangerous... And this dictionary is actually a precious thing."

Claugh heard that, showed an impatient expression.

“Who knows?”

But, Calne’s mouth didn’t stop moving, he looked at the title of the dictionary, and placed it back on the bookshelf with a straight expression: “I say, Claugh-senpai. For this past year you and Noa-san have been getting on well, but~ you haven’t made a move, what is going on? Is there a problem with you?”

Claugh heard that, and frowned.

“Ah, that’s enough, you’re noisy!”

“How am I noisy! Noa-san is very pitiful! You are always going on dates, and you two are lovey-dovey towards each other, but you are always one step away from the doorway, no matter how reserved the girl is...”

“Wh, what is called one step away from the doorway, I say you...”

But Calne didn’t let up on Claugh.

“Ne, gamble on it, attack Noa-san, marry her, have children, and settle down, or else I’ll be very very worried.”

“I’m the one worried about your brain...”

“Ah, that’s unfair.”

“The one that’s unfair is you?”

Saying that, Claugh sighed.

Lately whenever he talked to this person, they would always end up talking about this.

Always persuading, marry Noa! Marry Noa!

I myself don’t have that kind of plans.

Claugh raised his head, looked at Calne, and planned to tell him this—

But Calne interrupted him, an expression as if he knew what Claugh wanted to say.

“...I believe, war will always happen, Claugh-senpai. If there is a war after today... even if Claugh-senpai is killed in battle... Noa-san will want to be with Claugh-senpai.”

He said that.

“...”

Claugh frowned when he heard that.

“Anyway, there isn’t much time, the situation of the world...”

Saying that, Calne stopped.

But, Claugh already knew what Calne wanted to say.

There isn’t much time.

The present stable situation wouldn’t continue forever.

He was very clear about that.

At the present thanks to the alliance between the neighbouring countries Nelpha, Runa and such, they had a peaceful period, where there were no conflicts, but the situation in the central continent seemed to have become quite serious.

And the fuse would eventually reach the southern continent.

So, they’d take advantage of the present... take advantage of the short peaceful time.

Because in the end, the only things that humans could do were two things—

Live and die.

Only these two things.

But.

“Even so, what about you?”

Claugh asked.

“Ah?”

Calne gave a surprised sound.

Claugh said:

“I mean, you’re always worried about others, what about yourself?”

Calne laughed.

“Eh? I’m different from Claugh-senpai, I have always maintained a good relationship with women? I always go out with three noble ladies...”

But, Claugh interrupted him.

“Then, are you going to marry them?”

He said unhappily.

“...Eh? Ah, no, that...”

“You’re going to play around with those women, and have kids?”

“...That...”

Calne wanted to speak then paused, Claugh ignored him, continuing:

“If I’m not wrong, Eslina is already fourteen... no, fifteen years old? In this country, she is of marriageable age.”

Calne heard that, had a troubled smile.

“Really, Claugh-senpai is taking this too far. Eslina is younger than me...”

“Only by four years! This doesn’t count as anything. I’m much older than Noa.”

“...But—”

“If it’s you, Fiole wouldn’t protest.”

“That doesn’t have any relation with the truth...”

But, Claugh interrupted him.

“You like Eslina, isn’t that right?”

He said that.

But, this sentence didn’t cause Calne’s expression to change.

But, Claugh was clearer than anyone else, there was a strong wavering in Calne’s heart.

Calne spoke:

“No, I say, that is really Claugh-senpai’s mis...”

He was interrupted again.

“How long do you think I’ve known you?”

“I said you are mis...”

“I didn’t misunderstand. I say, your attitude towards Eslina is too strange, you’re always widening the distance between the two of you, and always mentioning the topic of other women... Actually your thoughts are too obvious.”

At this moment Calne’s expression finally changed.

“Can I ask, is it really that obvious?”

“Eh, it’s very obvious...”

“...Ah, I have a kind of... feeling that I want to die.”

Calne’s expression became very weak.

Claugh laughed when he saw that.

“See? You too... In this past year, you didn’t dare to do anything too?”

“...Uh.”

“Loser.”

“... Uh uh uh.”

“Alright, since that’s the case, I’m going to repeat the things you just said to me. Eh~ What did you say... War will always happen. Calne. If there is a war after today... Calne is too weak, so he could be killed in battle... Even so, I trust that Eslina will want to be with you.”

Calne heard that, and frowned.

“...It sounds even more annoying, than what I said.”

“Then don’t be so fussy.”

“Of course I must be fussy. Because I’m different from Claugh-senapi, I’m a delicate person.”

“Where?”

“Like here.”

Saying that, Calne pressed a hand on his chest, Claugh smiled widely when he saw that.

“If it hurts, I’ll soothe it hard?”

“If it’s like that I will die, forget about it.”

Calne shrugged with a joking expression.

This topic ended here.

In the end there wasn’t any conclusion. It was always like that. This topic always turned very ambiguous, and everything had become very ambiguous, a year had passed like this.

A year.

“...Marriage?”

Claugh murmured softly.

“Ah?”

Calne asked, but Claugh shook his head and said:

“...Nothing.”

Then, he took out his watch. It was fifteen minutes past nine, it was fifteen minutes past their meeting time.

“The movements of Sion that person are too slow.”

At this moment, he looked at the table near him.

This table suddenly appeared probably a year ago, it was the table of the afternoon nap man who was always hung around Sion, ate and drank free of charge and made people angry.

Claugh placed the books or dictionaries on the floor, then he sat on the top of the table and said.

“...Could we have mixed up the meeting spot?”

Calne sat on the chair before Sion’s table too.

“Eh, but I was called here too?”

“Uh, then, he really had a stomach upset?”

“Or it’s because of his lover?”

“No no, don’t think that he looks like that, Sion-san...”

But, Calne closed his mouth at this point, he looked slightly reluctant.

“No, he really doesn’t have a lover.”

“I said so?”

Calne looked at Clauth with an incomprehensible expression.

“How should I say it? Why does Sion-san have no interest in women? That... he shouldn’t be homosexual?”

“...Uh.”

“Sion-san needs to have children quickly, even that Froade-san is worried.”

Saying that, Calne laughed.

Clauth laughed too.

Yes.

Indeed for a period of time, Froade thought that the Hero King Sion Astal had to quickly have children to continue his bloodline, and frantically introduced Sion to girls, but all his hard work was for naught.

“Oh yes, that gloomy guy hasn’t been saying that he wants to help match make Sion lately.” Clauth said.

“Ah, that’s right.”

“Why? Don’t tell me Sion has a girlfriend already?”

“I didn’t hear of that?”

“I didn’t hear of that too. Ah, but...”

At this moment, Clauth suddenly remembered something, and covered his mouth.

Calne saw that and said:

“Eh? Eh? Do you have an idea of who it is?”

“No, ah~ It’s not an idea, but... ne, it’s that, isn’t there a woman who is always with that idiot man who sleeps for a thousand years?”

“Ferris-san?”

“That lady.”

“That person is really a beauty, right~ Although she’s a little cold.”

“Don’t you think that it’s because that woman only has a good looking face, so she can get along with Sion? Or is it that after going out with her, it caused Sion to not have any interest in women...”

But, Calne heard that, laughed while shaking his head.

“No no, there’s no such thing. Because Ferris-san liked Ryner-san.”

“Eh? Is that so?”

“Yes. Or else the two of them are always together, isn’t that weird?”

“Ah, that’s right. If she doesn’t like him, a woman wouldn’t be with a man who likes to sleeps so much, who looks like it’s confirmed that he doesn’t have any future.”

“That’s right, there must be love in there. Love.”

“Love, ah?”

Saying that, Claugh casually thought of the figures of the two people.

The two people that appeared a year ago, strangely stayed by Sion’s side and quarrelled ceaselessly.

Every time Claugh saw them, most of the time it was that idiot man had a sleepy face, and that woman was using a sword to beat that idiot man.

Claugh said:

“...That sort of love is unpleasant.”

“It’s very high-class?”

“Ah? High-class? What is that?”

“Eh? Because that’s a type of game?”

“Is it?”

“It is, or else being beaten to that state, normal people would have died countless times.”

“...Uh, I think the two of them are different...”

“There’s nothing different. There’s love in there. Love.”

“I say, you only want to say that phrase right?”

“Ahaha.”

Calne laughed, then turned around, turning to Sion’s table.

Then.

“...”

He was silent.

Claugh saw that, and was silent too.

Then he looked out of the window.

There was a large downpour going on outside.

Lightning flashed across the sky several times.

Following a few pauses after that, thunder boomed.

“...It sounds like the thunder is in a very far place? Is it opposite the mountains...?”

He said that.

It hadn’t been raining lately, but from today’s rain, this year’s rainy season could come slightly earlier.

The temperature had dropped noticeably.

Was the season changing?

“...How troublesome.”

Claugh murmured softly.

In the years the rain season came early, the rainfall would be more than usual, and thus cause flooding.

Uh, in this past year, Sion had been putting much effort into this area, even if there were more rain water, perhaps they could still hold on. But...

“Why is Sion that person so slow? He couldn’t have forgotten about the fact that he called us here?”

Claugh said that.

But Calne spoke at this moment:

“Claugh-senpai.”

For some reason, he called Claugh with a low and soft voice.

Claugh heard that, moving his gaze from the window to Calne.

“Eh?”

At this moment Calne said with his back still facing him:

“...That, I know the reason why we were called here.”

Claugh heard that, stared at Calne with a surprised expression.

“Ah? What do you mean? What did you see?”

“...”

But Calne didn’t reply.

His back still faced Claugh.

“Hey, Calne.”

“...”

“What is it with you? You’re noisy... What did you see?”

So, Calne turned back.

He was smiling. That kind of smile that was as if he were troubled, that he would show when Claugh teased him, holding a thick stack of documents in his hands.

Claugh saw that and asked:

“What is that?”

Calne still had a sad smile.

“...Before we talk about serious matters, can I take back what I said earlier?”

“Ah? What are you talking about?”

“...Ne, it’s what I said earlier. I wanted you to quickly confess to Noa-san... I think, please let me take back those words.”

Calne said that.

Claugh heard it, and immediately understood. He understood what Calne saw, he understood why they were called here today.

It was over.

The sand grains in the hour glass had finished flowing.

“...Ah, is that so?”

Claugh said that.

“Yes.”

Calne nodded, then—

“Do you want to see it?”

He passed the documents in his hands to Claugh.

But Claugh shook his head.

“There’s no need.”

“Sion, that person will tell us personally?”

“Probably? We were called here for this reason. But... Sion-san must not feel good about it?”

“No, that person...”

At this moment, a beam of light flashed through the sky.

This time a booming sound followed closely behind it.

Claugh was interrupted because of this.

“...”

But, he didn’t need to say anything more.



It was already past ten o'clock.

But.

“...Damnit, why is the rain not stopping?”

When he came out from the restaurant, Ryner looked at the sky.

He ate and drank in the restaurant, joked around with Ferris, unknowingly, the gold coins he got from Sion was actually taken by Ferris, Ryner shouted at her—don't fool around! In the end, he could only return and cry, anyway it's useless no matter what I say, right?

Just like that, three hours passed by.

It had been three hours already, but the rain showed no signs of abating.

“It seems heavier than before we entered the restaurant?”

Ryner said as if groaning.

It seemed that when he returned to the inn he would be completely drenched.

“What should we do, Ferris?”

He turned back to look at Ferris who had walked out of the restaurant too.

For some reason, she was actually holding an umbrella, and it was two umbrellas.

“Eh, how did you get that?”

Ryner asked, she replied simply.

“I asked for it.”

“From who?”

“Uh, an hour ago didn’t several men who looked very ugly, come to chat me up, and attempt to chase after me?”

“Ah~ you’re saying the two men that were beaten by you until they were half dead?”

That night, a total of sixteen men came to chat Ferris up, all of them were rejected simply by Ferris, in the end she viciously punched two strangely stubborn, persistent men.

“What happened to them?”

“They said, we can’t return tonight, Aneki please use this.”

“Aneki?”

“Uh.”

“...You...really attract this kind of people easily.”

She heard that, and nodded hard.

“Who told me to be a beauty.” She said.

No, although she was a beauty, but wasn’t she inclined to violence? Ryner wanted to say that, but he was scared that he couldn’t get the umbrella, so—
“...Uh, you are really a beauty.”

He might as play along.

She actually got happy about it.

“Uh!”

After nodding, raised her head to look at the sky.

“Speaking of which, the rain is really heavy.”

“Eh. The temperature dropped drastically, it’s cold.”

“It looks like it’ll be better to go back earlier tonight.”

“Yes. Let’s go home.”

“Eh.”

She nodded, took a step forward, opened the umbrella, and actually opened both umbrellas at the same time.

Then, she held two umbrellas, making as if to go home.

“Wait~”

She heard that, turned back.

“He he he~”

“Uh, this isn’t the time to be laughing.”

“You want to borrow an umbrella?”

Ryner heard that, revealed a surprised expression.

“No, I wanted to say, you’re holding two umbrellas at the same time, wouldn’t the water droplets drip down from between the umbrellas?”

“Ah.”

Ferris heard that and groaned softly.

Yes. Because she was holding two umbrellas at the same time, it caused the rain drops to drip through the gap between the umbrellas, drenching her, and the temperature was low.

“You must be very cold now?”

“Uh.”

“Don’t do such foolish things, give me one quickly.”

“Uh, uh.”

Saying that, she threw an umbrella to Ryner. Ryner caught it, then held it up, and stepped towards the road from the restaurant.

He was momentarily enshrouded with the noisy rain sounds.

“What a heavy rain.”

Ryner said, Ferris said with a trembling voice:

“Ryner.”

“Eh?”

“It’s abnormally cold.”

“Hurry up and go home!”

Ryner shouted, Ferris nodded when she heard that.

“Then, I’m going back. Don’t run around naked in the night too, and attack women everywhere.”

“...I think that in this kind of night with heavy rain, probably no one would go out... forget it, be careful yourself.”

“Uh, then, I’m going back.”

“Be careful.”

“Uh.”

“Then goodbye.”

“Uh.”

Ferris nodded, and turned around.

Ryner stared at her figure for a while.

So he realised, perhaps it was because Ryner let her drink a bit of alcohol? Her steps were slightly unsteady.

But, nothing would happen to her because of this?

Even if twenty muscular men attacked her, the pitiful ones would be them...

At this moment, he shivered.

“Ah, it’s cold... I should hurry up and go back.”

Saying that, he turned his back to Ferris.

Then walked forward.

He took a turn in the middle of the shopping street, after entering an alley he came to a road that was slightly wider.

The rain was still heavy.

As if wanting to finish pouring all the rain that hadn't been falling in this period of time in one night.

It was slightly past ten o'clock.

To the customers who were gathered in the small hotel, this time could only be counted as the start of a good show, but, there were no passers-by on the road.

"Ah, how cold."

Ryner said softly.

He just needed to pass through this road, and he would reach the hotel that he was staying in. Just a few more minutes and he could return to the hotel. So, he tried to simulate the process of after he returned. Returning to the hotel, take a bath then go to bed and sleep? Or sleep first, then bath tomorrow?

"Ah, but I'm completely drenched by the rain... I should bath first then?"

He muttered as he walked.

The more important problem was tomorrow, he thought, although Sion that guy said work was already completely, he could rest properly for a while, but if that was a lie, then he might be woken up early again tomorrow, urging him to work faster. Could he really sleep until afternoon tomorrow? If that was true, that would really be too blissful. As Ryner thought of this trivial things, he walked.

The hotel was before him.

He was almost reaching.

"..."

But, at this moment.

Ryner suddenly stopped.

Because in this noisy rain.

He could still faintly sense a presence.

He tilted the umbrella slightly, raised his gaze.

So, he saw on the road before him.

In the darkness before him, a man was standing there.

In such a heavy rain, he actually didn't have an umbrella.

His hair and clothes were thoroughly drenched by the rain.

The man was completely soaked, staring steadily at Ryner.

But, Ryner couldn't see the expression on the man's face clearly.

Because the rain blurred his vision, causing him to be unable to see the man's expression clearly.

The man was laughing.

Or crying?

The expression on the man's face was that hard to differentiate.

Ryner stared at that man—

“...Sion?”

He said.

So the man replied.

“...Ryner...”

Because the rain was too loud, Ryner couldn't hear what kind of feelings were in that man's voice.

Ryner said when he saw this:

“What are you doing not even holding an umbrella? You'll get a cold?”

So Sion raised his face to look at the sky, as if realising now that rain was falling from the sky.

“Eh? Ah... Ah, that's right.”

“Uh, what do you mean that's right, I say... Forget it. Hurry up and get under my umbrella.”

Ryner held the umbrella higher and spoke.

Although Sion was completely soaked, there was no meaning in using the umbrella to block the rain, but it was better than continuing to be drenched by the rain?

“Ne, come over.”

Ryner said.

But, Sion didn’t look at him.

He only stared at the black sky.

“...”

“Hey! What is up with you?”

Saying that, Ryner frowned, making as if to approach Sion.

He took a step forward.

But, at this moment.

“...Eh?”

Ryner stopped again.

Then he raised the umbrella in his hand slightly.

He looked at the surrounding scenery closely.

Although the rain was heavy, his vision was blurred, and he couldn’t hear the voice clearly.

Even so, Ryner still looked around, at the same time he listened closely.

He only saw darkness.

He only heard the sound of rain.

The sound of wind.

And the thunder that sounded sometimes.

There were no human presences.

It was already so late, in addition there weren’t many people passing through this road usually, most importantly it was that it was still raining so hard now, it

was to be expected that there was no human presence?

But, in the depths of the thunder... Ryner concentrated his attention on the depths of the darkness.

There was a small odd feeling.

It was faint, it was really only faintly...

At this moment, Ryner looked at Sion.

“Eh...”

Ryner opened his mouth and said:

“This time, what kind of troublesome thing are you pushing to me again?”

Sion heard that, looked at Ryner, he still couldn’t see the expression on his face clearly.

It looked like he was crying.

Or he was laughing.

Or it was his smile that as usual made people mad?

Ryner stepped forward in Sion’s direction again.

“Did you just say it, that work was already completed?”

“It’s completed.”

He took another step towards Sion again.

“Then what are you doing again this time?”

“...Nothing, I only felt like seeing your face.”

Sion said whimsically. But, perhaps it was because the wind was too strong? His voice sounded like it was trembling.

Ryner took another step towards Sion again.

“Ah? What did you say?”

“I’m serious.”

“It sounds unpleasant.”

“Haha.”

Sion laughed.

Then it was another step.

Another step.

Just as Ryner reached Sion’s side he stopped.

Because, at this moment he could see Sion’s expression clearly.

“...”

Ryner stared at Sion.

In the rain.

His smiling face.

His seemingly happy, smiling happily face.

But, the crying face.

Sion stared at that face and said:

“You...are crying?”

“No.”

“It looks like you are.”

“It’s because of the rain.”

“Is it?”

Sion nodded, then smiled again.

The tears on his face did look like rain.

Ryner saw that.

“Eh.”

He nodded as if bored, then said:

“So? What are you planning to do now? I...”

At this moment, Ryner stopped.

He confirmed his surrounding situation again. He turned his gaze to the

people who were around him as if surrounding him, giving off killing intent, lastly turning his gaze forward.

Staring at Sion.

Sion was still smiling.

A sad smile.

A smile that made people feel unhappier by looking at it.

Ryner saw that and said:

“...I knew it, this situation would probably appear one day.”

He said with in half amusement. Sion didn’t reply. But Ryner said with an expression that was like crying and laughing: “...It’s always like that, things always suddenly become like this...”

“...”

But Sion didn’t reply.

So, Ryner stared at him.

“I say Sion...”

“...”

“You.”

“...”

“You want to...kill me?”

He asked that.

Sion—

“...”

He still didn’t reply.

He only stared at Ryner.

Stared at him steadily.

Adoringly, pitifully, sadly, happily, many many complex feelings were mixed in

this.

But, he was still smiling.

The usual smile.

He who was called the perfect king, the perfect smile that he had.

“...”

But, in the end...

In the end his expression suddenly—

Changed completely.

The smile that was always perfect twisted totally.

Just like an expression of a kid seeming as if they were about to cry loudly.

“...I’m sorry, Ryner...”

He spoke, his voice was shaking, hoarse, a voice that was as if trying to suppress his scream.

“...I didn’t stick to our promise... I’m sorry...”

Sion said that.

But Ryner heard it.

“...”

He didn’t speak.

No, he didn’t have any time to speak.

Because the killing intent in his surroundings expanded in one breathe.

The shadows hiding in the darkness appeared.

Left and right and behind him.

From the presences he could tell the abilities of these people.

The situation was quite challenging.

But, Ryner didn’t move.

Only.

“...”

Smiled in loneliness.

Then said softly:

“...Ah...Is that so...”

He murmured like that. He murmured in loneliness as if he had given up, his eyes half-lidded.

Because, he thought that this was something that couldn't be helped.

Because, he was already used to this kind of thing.

Because he was an Alpha Stigma monster, a person who would only hurt people, make people hate him.

All in all he was a monster that didn't have any worth in living.

So, he was already used to being betrayed by the important people.

No, even he himself had always thought that.

It would be better if he disappeared.

It would be better if he disappeared from this world faster.

Before he hurt anyone, before they were hurt because of this kind of thing, wouldn't it be better if he died earlier?

He himself also thought of this.

But, he still lived on till now...

And he hurt another important person again.

He looked at Sion before him.

Sion was crying.

He pressed his chest and cried. As if pressing against a hole that had appeared there, grabbing his clothes hard, almost ripping his clothes off his chest.

The expression that was deeply hurt.

The face that was despairing.

At this moment that voice spoke.

It was that voice again—

“Ugly monster... what kind of unfulfillable dream are you having?”

Ryner heard that, momentarily wanting to cry.

“You should have clearly known it. Your monstrous hands stained with blood... are unable to hold on to anything... are unable to grab onto anywhere.”

Ryner wanted to cry when he heard this.

“That guy is only a monster that will harm the world by living.”

Ryner wanted to cry.

He wanted to shout—I know that the best myself!

But, even so... I still had that dream.

I had an unfulfillable dream.

Because Ferris... that person said, even if I am someone like this, she still needs me.

Because Sion said, come with me, I need you.

So, I had a dream.

I had a foolish dream.

I thought that everyone was always laughing, crying, shouting, then the days of laughter would always continue.

I had that kind of foolish dream.

But.

But in the end it was—

“Is that so...”

Ryner muttered with a voice like he was about to give up.

He didn't understand, why did Sion want to kill him now.

But he felt that, this didn't matter anymore.

Only in that split second, he felt that there wasn't anything bad in dying here. If he could die in Sion's hands.

If he would die in the hands of someone who said he needed him once, perhaps that would be the best ending?

At this moment.

The owner of the killing intent came to Ryner's side.

Something.

Something approached, attempting to chop off Ryner's head.

Ryner shut his eyes.

“...”

But, a strange image suddenly appeared behind his shut eyes.

It was the face of that violent, troubling dango lady.

She was usually expressionless, but what appeared in Ryner's mind was her lonely expression that was nearly crying.

She said before—

“...Are you an idiot? If you die...”

At this moment, Ryner swiftly opened his eyes, grabbing something that swung over from the side.

The swiftness of his movements...

“Eh?”

Even he himself felt surprised.

Initially he was planning to die, but he didn't know why, his body reacted.

He grabbed someone's arm that had attacked from the side, locking the joint, bending hard, then threw that person out. Then turned to the person attacking from the left, the assassin from the left was handled by him too.

Ryner squatted, dodging an attack from behind, standing up, then sweeping his leg behind him, kicking the head of enemy attacking from behind him,

kicking the enemy away.

Just like that, he settled all the enemies.

His movements were smooth like flowing water, he didn't even look at his enemies, just depending on the presences to move his body nimbly.

The enemy that flew back fell on the ground, and didn't get up.

After confirming that, Ryner turned to Sion again.

Before him in the heavy rain.

He stared at the figure in the darkness before him...

"...It seems like... Ah~ I'm sorry, Sion. I can't die by your hands."

Ryner said that.

Sion heard it.

"..."

He didn't reply.

But, Ryner continued:

"I suddenly thought, it seems that... if someone like me dies... there will be an idiot who will feel lonely."

"...You're referring to Ferris?"

"Eh."

"Heh. You're saying that person who said, "...Are you an idiot? If you die... I will be lonely"...?"

"...Ah, you're mentioning this again, I will be embarrassed..."

Ryner scratched his head, then said:

"But, I wouldn't escape. I don't want to hurt her."

Sion laughed when he heard that.

"...Is that so... But, losing you, I will be lonely too?"

"Is that so?"

“Eh.”

“Then why do you want to kill me?”

“...Because there is a need to.”

“Can’t you explain the reason?”

“No.”

“Isn’t this too unfair?”

So Sion shrugged.

“Reality... is always harsh.”

“Eh... that’s right. But, even so—”

Saying that, Ryner started to lower his body, injecting power into his whole body.

To Sion—making a fighting posture to his friend.

“If that’s so... I can’t let you let you kill me. Apart from this reason, I have already made a promise with someone, I have already chosen the person to kill me.”

Yes.

He had said so.

He wouldn’t escape.

He wouldn’t escape and hurt others.

He wouldn’t run away from the monster in him.

But, if he lost to that monster...

At that moment please kill me. – He had said that to Ferris.

And she... nodded her head in agreement.

“If that... can let you come back.”

She had said that.

To her, this was a last resort, it was the worst promise that would make people feel unhappy.

But she had promised.

So.

“...I can’t let you kill me.”

Ryner told Sion.

Sion said with a troubled expression:

“Is that a promise with Ferris too?”

“Yes.”

“It seems... you’re always making promises with Ferris, I’m a little jealous.”

“You’re saying something that makes me feel uncomfortable again.”

“Haha... Forget it, but this is something that cannot be helped too, the one who broke the promise first is me.”

Ryner heard that, stared at Sion.

“...I took you as my best friend.”

Sion heard that, his expression twisted again, an expression as if he were crying and laughing.

“...Me too.”

“But, you still want to kill me?”

“Eh.”

“It’s already been decided?”

“Eh.”

“Then...”

Ryner said softly like this.

“...Then... is there no other way?”

Sion nodded when he heard that, having a sad expression like a fool.

“Eh, there’s no other way.”

He lowered his body too, pulling a blade out from his waist.

Then—

“Let’s end everything, Ryner.”

He said that.

End.

They had already reached the end.

Yes. The ending always approached suddenly.

Even if he shouted loudly, wait! – he was still unable to stop it.

It was always like that. The more he felt it was important, the faster it would disappear.

As long as he hesitated for an instant, it would immediately fall from his hands.

Giving up, losing it.

Giving up, losing it.

Always, always repeating in a cycle.

In the past he had thought that this was something that couldn’t be helped.

Because he was a monster, he didn’t have any right to live.

The people beside him cried, that woman cried, Biore cried, Kiefer cried, Toni cried, Tahl cried, Fahl cried, Lafla cried, Pua cried.

In the end even Kiefer cried.

Even so, he still felt that this was something that couldn’t be helped.

Because no matter how he shouted, the important things would disappear quickly.

Because the ending would come quickly.

He was a monster, a person who didn't have any worth in living...

Even so.

Even so, from the start he shouldn't have wanted anything.

From the start he should have given up.

Lost it.

It was over.

"Let it end."

Sion who said these words cried.

It was the same scene again.

There was someone important crying again, disappear.

It was over.

It had ended.

It was finished.

It had ended.

Everything ended so simply.

Everything slipped from his hands so easily.

Giving up, losing, giving up, losing—the cycle repeated itself.

If it was the past him, perhaps he would feel that this was something that couldn't be changed and give up easily.

If it was the past him, perhaps he would feel that it was something that couldn't be helped and give up easily.

But.

But, now Ryner laughed.

"...It's a pity, Sion, it's not over. You can't win me."

"I can."

But Ryner shook his head.

“No, you can’t win. If I use my full strength, it’s not small at all? After beating you up viciously, your good friend Ryner-sama will listen to you properly, what has troubled you until like that.”

Sion heard that.

“...”

He couldn’t reply.

But Ryner continued:

“I will also call Ferris out, let us laugh properly, and kick your silly troubles out of the atmosphere.”

Yes.

Because he had already decided.

Because it was not the same.

He had said, if he found something important, he wouldn’t lose it again.

He had said, at least he would use all his might to fight for it.

Because he recognised Ferris.

Because he recognised Sion. So he allowed himself to have this kind of thoughts.

So—Ryner told Sion:

“...I wouldn’t give up.”

“...”

“Even if you reach a dead end, can’t think of anything else... sink into darkness, and are unable to escape from the darkness...”

“...”

Ryner looked at Sion, saying determinedly:

“I wouldn’t... give up on you.”

“...”

Sion didn’t reply.

But, Ryner didn't mind. He reached out his hand.

That was something that a person told him a long time ago.

It was something that Sion told him a long time ago.

Ryner reached his hand out to Sion.

His tone was determined...

He said determinedly:

"...Come with me, Sion."

Ryner said that.

"..."

Sion's expression didn't change.

No, actually it was already twisted to the degree that there wouldn't be any changes.

The expression on his face was as if he were tolerating some kind of pain, going through some kind of suffering.

He said with a small slight voice:

"...No... you will die here."

"I wouldn't die."

"You will die."

"I wouldn't die. Unless I save you who are crying, otherwise I wouldn't die."

Sion fell silent again.

He raised his face to the sky.

As if letting the rain wash the tears from his face, then breathing in deeply.

"..."

Then he looked at Ryner again.

His tears were no longer flowing.

He only looked at Ryner with an endless affection, laughing.

“...Ah, indeed... my choice was right after all.”

“I~ am asking you, what is your decision, explain it to me first...”

But, Sion interrupted Ryner, swinging the sword.

Then.

“...I want to save you. No matter what the world will become...”

“Ah? What are you saying...”

“It’s over, Ryner.”

“I want you to explain that...”

But, Sion started to move.

He lowered the sword, running straight towards Ryner.

Ryner saw that and prepared his stance.

“Ah, damnit.”

They had known each other for a few years, but he had never fought with Sion seriously...

“...”

Ryner stared at Sion steadily, discovering that his movements were faster than what Ryner had imagined.

But, even so.

“...You actually want to kill me like that.”

“I didn’t think of that.”

“Even so...”

But, at that moment Ryner stopped speaking.

Because behind him—

The presence of the enemy who was defeated by him revived from behind him again.

And a strong killing intent struck towards Ryner...

“Wa?!”

Ryner dodged at the critical moment.

He looked back, attempting to defeat the enemy that had attacked again...

But, at this moment—

“...Eh?”

Ryner couldn't help but make a surprised sound.

Because there was no one before him.

Because he clearly turned his head in response to the huge killing intent from behind him, but there was no one there.

There really wasn't anyone before him.

The assassin that he thought had revived was actually lying obediently on the ground not far away. The assassin wearing black clothes, lay on the ground and had completely fainted.

There was no one before him, no one had attacked him.

But the killing intent was expanding.

“What is going on...?”

Ryner noticed the aura surrounding him, but he still didn't see any figures.

The killing intent appeared in the space that was empty...

But.

“...Ah.”

At this moment Ryner discovered it.

On the ground before him. The bodies of the black-clothed assassins collapsed on the ground were slowly diminishing.

It would be more accurate to say, he discovered that the things in the black clothes on the ground... dissolved into the ground.

The human bodies gave out sss, ssss strange sounds, becoming liquid and mixing with the rain.

What a strange scene.

Ryner looked at this scene...

“...Sion, you couldn’t have...”

Ryner knew that that scene was.

“You couldn’t have...”

Humans becoming liquid.

Ryner had seen this kind of scene.

That was the past Roland.

It was the crazy experiments, that had proceeded in Roland in that mad era.

The crazy human experiments.

Among the numerous human experiments, this was counted as one of the worst experiments.

There was only the theoretically successful, there had never been an experiment that truly succeeded.

The experiment that used a hundred people as the experiment subjects, creating the deaths of a hundred people.

And it was the worst experiment that forcefully extracted the foetus from the mother’s stomach for its proceedings.

Ever since Sion became the king of this country, this kind of experiment had obviously been banned immediately. No, he should say, almost all the human experiments had been prohibited.

Zenkekai, Flesh corrosion magic, Eim forbidden spell should have been prohibited.

So, this should have been an experiment that hadn’t been completed.

It should be an experiment that didn’t exist in this world.

But, why did this appear here?

Why?

“...You, couldn’t have...”

Ryner’s whole body was trembling. He looked at Sion.

It wasn’t possible. This person, Sion couldn’t have done something like this.

But, Sion held the sword, saying firmly:

“...Yes, I allowed the experiment to be completed.”

“You lie!”

“It’s true.”

“Why did you have to do that?”

Ryner shouted.

But Sion said:

“...Do you have the leisure to be looking around?”

In that moment.

The killing intent exploded from beneath Ryner’s feet.

The half transparent arm suddenly snaked up from the ground that was initially empty, that was soaked by the rain, attempting to grab Ryner’s feet.

“Damnit!”

In that critical moment, Ryner leapt away from his initial position.

But there were other assassins waiting in the place he jumped away from.

Another assassin.

Another sacrifice of the human experiments.

This assassin was no longer human shaped.

A monster that had something like four arms growing from its black outfit.

The arms made to attack Ryner...

But, he dodged, at the same time he received the arm. Then the back of his hand that he used to receive the arm made a burning sound.

“Ah!”

He made a pained sound, the assassin's hand was as hot as fire.

That arm reached towards Ryner.

"Ugh."

He quickly grabbed the assassin's face, attempting to break the face and head...

But.

"Aaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhh! Damnit!!"

Ryner couldn't break the other's head, he wasn't able to kill the assassin.

In the period, the arm of the assassin that was as hot as flames still burnt Ryner's shoulder.

"Uah!"

Ryner made a pained shout.

Sion held the sword and swung it over from behind him.

"...You can't be merciful to the enemy!"

Making to stab the sword into Ryner's neck...

But, Ryner used his left hand to stop him, but Sion's attack was able to stop immediately, Ryner was pushed to the ground by him. Sion pressed down Ryner from above, pushing the sword closer.

Ryner attempted to raise his legs to push aside the sword, planning to let the sword strike the ground, then forcefully leaping up.

But, his legs were grabbed by someone, he couldn't move.

It was that assassin that had become fluid who grabbed his legs.

"Damnit."

Ryner groaned.

At that moment, an assassin opposite Sion started to draw a magic formation of light.

That was the first magic formation that Ryner had seen.

That was a kind of forbidden spell.

Because the effects were too great, there wasn't any way to completely counter the spell, the user would be forced to pay a large price... it was a magic forbidden from use due to this kind of numerous reasons.

Now the assassin was attempting to use the forbidden magic...

"Oh no..."

Ryner muttered, closing his eyes then opening them, a red glowing pentacle arose in his black eyes.

Special eyes.

Special eyes called **Alpha Stigma**.

The mark of the monster that everyone ostracised, took as a taboo.

But that pair of eyes could see through all magic.

Even if it were forbidden magic.

Ryner looked at the magic that the assassin opposite Sion was about to activate.

In a moment he analysed everything about that magic.

The effect, response, activation sequence, time of casting, and the way to stop it.

So he discovered, that forbidden magic—

"..."

It was really the worst magic.

The body components of the user would rot, as the price of the curse that the enemy definitely couldn't solve.

Just by using that magic once, the caster's skin would disintegrate, his organs would dissolve, his whole body would rot. This was a magic that normal people could definitely not use.

But, that assassin was attempting to use it without a change in expression.

No, it should be said that he had the ability to use it.

Because there were other magics cast on that assassin's body

Ryner used **Alpha Stigma** to look at the assassin. He discovered that a complex magic formation was etched in the center of that assassin's throat. That magic formation... was something Ryner was familiar with.

It was the magic formation that was used to proceed with the experiment Flesh corrosion magic.

It was an experiment to create a monster whose whole body had rotted, was numb to pain, and even if the body was destroyed he could still continue fighting. An experiment that created a monster whose whole body had rotted but could continue living.

And the sacrifice of that experiment was attempting to use forbidden magic.

But...

"Will I let you get the opportunity?"

Ryner used a hand to stop Sion's sword, the other hand danced in the air, attempting to draw the magic formation that would neutralise that magic before it activated...

But at this moment—

That arm was burnt.

"Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Ryner's arm was burnt by the assassin that had that fire arm, his whole body was restrained on the ground, giving out a scream.

In that time, the forbidden spell was completed.

"Your Majesty, please leave, the spell is already completed..."

The assassin said that.

But, Sion shook his head.

"...There's no need, release the magic."

"B, but, this way, Your Majesty will..."

But Sion still shook his head.

“Don’t worry, there’s no problem, I will kill Ryner.”

“...I understand.”

The forbidden spell was released immediately like that.

The assassin followed Sion’s orders.

From this voice, although his body was an experiment that was cast to continuously rot, he seemed to worship Sion, it didn’t sound like he was brain-washed.

Ryner heard that, raising his eyes to look at Sion.

“...You...what have you done to this country?”

So, Sion had a mild expression that was completely different from just now and said:

“...Nothing much, the things that I did were normal. I only chose to do the necessary things.”

“Because there was a need, so you did human experimentation?”

“...”

“Because there is a need, so you have to kill me?”

“...I don’t need to say anything to you...”

But Ryner interrupted him.

“Answer me! What are you here for? What burden are you carrying? Can’t I help you?”

“...”

“Weren’t you scolding me a year ago? Reprimanding me on why did I not talk to you before I came to a dead end? You asked me, why didn’t I tell you clearly when I felt sad? Now it’s me who is saying these words! Why didn’t you tell me? Why must you carry the responsibility alone? I’m returning those nonsensical words that you said in the past to you! Am I not involved in this?! Am I not your best friend?! Answer me! Sion Astal!”

Ryner roared.

But Sion's expression didn't change. He said with an empty expression as if he couldn't see anything: "...It's all over, Ryner."

"It's not over yet. Answer me..."

But, he was interrupted.

"It's over. I'm going to kill you."

Sion pressed his whole body weight down. The sword approached Ryner's neck, it was quite hard blocking the whole weight with his left arm.

But Ryner still shouted.

"You can't kill me!"

But his voice didn't travel into Sion's ears.

Even so, Ryner still shouted.

"You you can't kill your companions!"

But, his voice didn't travel into Sion's ears.

Sion's whole soul was as if it were displaced far away, there was no response.

Far away—Very far away.

As if he were in the darkness.

The darkness that Ryner didn't know of.

Rain.

Darkness.

Roland.

Human experiments.

Expressionless Sion.

Crying Sion.

Hero King.

The perfect... but lonely king.

And, the king who had changed completely.

“...You...What kind of place are you in?”

“...”

But, Sion still didn't reply.

He only used more strength, the sword approached—he was serious, this guy really wants to kill me!

But, Ryner glared at Sion and said:

“...I'm going to pull you back! No matter where you are, I will pull you back!”

Ryner's eyes narrowed sharply because of this.

“...I'm a little angry.”

Saying that, he put more power into his left arm.

Then broke the two fingers of the hand that Sion was using to hold the sword.

“Wa!”

Sion's expression changed largely instantly.

But Ryner didn't stop, he use the fingers of the right arm that was being restrained by the fire arm to draw a small magic structure, activating it.

“WHAT I SEEK IS>>>IZUCHI!”

In that moment.

A small, really small lightning appeared. Its strength was so weak that it couldn't compare to a normal Izuchi.

It was a magic that didn't have any killing strength.

And because his arm was restrained, he couldn't even lock on to the direction that the magic was released in accurately.

But, Ryner's finger was pointed to the ground.

The ground that was wet because of rain.

In an instant.

The lightning that released from the magic formation was conducted into the ground that was wet due to rain, and—it snaked through the water surface.

Lightning struck the assassin that was restraining Ryner's right arm, who had fire arms, and the assassin that was in liquid form who was restraining Ryner's legs, at the same time it attacked Ryner himself.

But, this lightning attack didn't cause any injuries.

It only caused a little shocking effect.

But, this was enough.

The forces restraining his right arm and legs slackened in that moment. Ryner made use of this time, pulling out his right arm, freeing his legs.

Then bent Sion's arm immediately, grabbing the sword from his hand, using that sword to dig into the foot of the assassin who had fire arms on his right.

"Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa?!"

The assassin screamed immediately, collapsing on the ground, Ryner ignored him, moving his right hand widely again.

This movement was to release a large-scale Izuchi.

This strike probably could handle the liquid state assassin. Ugh, obviously he had to adjust the power, to avoid causing his death.

If he could reduce the numbers of the enemy, he could probably easily defeat the sacrifice of the 腐食法 behind Sion?

There would be no problem.

Things would proceed smoothly.

Save Sion, saving this guy was not hard...

But.

"..."

Sion looked at the glowing magic structure that Ryner drew.

He still had an empty, as if looking into the distance expression.

Then, he slowly reached his hand out, a hand as if stopping Ryner from drawing the magic structure.

But.

"Too slow, it's activated. WHAT I SEEK IS>>> IZUCHI."

Ryner said the incantation.

Lightning appeared in the middle of the magic structure.

Until now, unless the magic structure was changed directly, otherwise the magic wouldn't stop.

But, Sion reached out his hand, he reached out the hand that had he had broken two fingers. Then waved it swiftly as if conducting.

In an instant.

Several strange things appeared, enveloping Ryner's magic.

That was something like black swords.

Black.

Black.

Swords blacker, darker than the night.

Something like mist came out from the swords, changing shape continuously, slowly wavering.

Black smoke.

Changing black smoke.

For some reason, Ryner actually knew that that smoke was.

He seemed to have seen it before.

He remembered he had seen that thing somewhere before.

That was—

That black smoke was the colour of blood.

The colour of black blood.

At that time he had seen the armour.

The armour made from blood.

In the dream.

Yes. In the dream.

The scene outside that red door.

A man crying as he swung his sword, the armour he wore on his body.

In the dream.

The man waved his sword.

He cried as he swung the sword.

He had a strong will.

He had a strong determination.

He cried as he swung the sword.

In the beginning it was a woman.

A woman who was so beautiful that it was unbelievable.

Giving off a saintly presence that was nearly blinding.

Goddess.

Yes, she must be a goddess.

He killed that goddess.

He cried, as he killed the goddess.

One.

Two.

Three.

Four.

“Th, what is this...”

Ryner trembled.

But, the memories that appeared in his mind still didn't stop.

Kill, kill, kill the goddesses.

In the period that he killed ceaselessly, his tears dried up.

A smile even appeared on the man's face.

He seemed to know that man's face.

He felt it was strangely familiar.

Five.

Six.

Seven.

Eight.

The scene was stained by blood, by blood.

The world was stained by blood, by blood.

Just like that, the goddesses disappeared.

Everything in this world.

Everything ended because of this.

The world ended because of this.

And—

He seemed to know the face of the man that killed the world.

The man that wore the armour made Ryner feel that he was familiar.

Ryner...

Ryner slowly raised his head to look at Sion.

“...What are you...”

At this moment, the magic structure that Ryner drew disappeared.

It was stabbed by the blood sword Sion created, the magic structure disappeared completely from this world.

“...How can that be?”

Ryner saw that, and felt surprised.

Because, he suddenly didn't know the magic structure, magic sequence that he was releasing, no, even what kind of magic it was he didn't know. No, he forgot what the magic displayed before his eyes was, as if that kind of thing didn't exist from the beginning.

Ryner was clearly using some kind of magic earlier.

But, he didn't know what that was.

There was a kind of feeling like a hole had been made in his spirit in his blurry memory.

Sion killed the existence of that magic itself.

But, he didn't stop killing.

Sion stared at Ryner.

But, it wasn't the Sion he recognised who was before Ryner.

No, he was Sion on the outside, but he didn't look human anymore.

The skin of his body was shining with a golden light.

Despair flowed in his body.

A complex picture, spell, magic, despair that even the Alpha Stigma was completely unable to analyse, everything in this world flowed under Sion's skin.

That curse enveloped the whole world.

Darkness, a blackness darker than darkness enveloped the entire world.

Scenes disappeared.

Streets disappeared.

The scenes of this world disappeared as if they jumped into another dimension.

Following that Sion spoke.

Using his golden eyes to stare at Ryner.

But, that voice...

It was no longer a human's voice.

"...Ah ah, ah ah ah, Ryner, ah ah, ah ah ah, you're here... My, my beloved... sad... lonely demon... Thanks to you, I have unsheathed the sword..."

That wasn't from Sion's mouth.

That was from everything in the world.

A voice resounding from everything in the world.

"You, you are..."

"Is it the time? It is the time. It is that time. Is it starting? Yes. Has it started? I will eat you. Then I will become **Real**. The **Solver of All Equations**... Ah ah ah ah ah ah, you are here? Ah ah ah ah ah, you are here... Since that is so...

Since that is so, then I will eat you."

"I, I'm asking you, what are you saying..."

But Sion...

No, that guy interrupted Ryner.

Using that hand, using that had that had despair ceaselessly flowing in it to place it on Ryner's neck.

Just this movement.

"....."

Ryner couldn't say anything.

He was unable to say anything.

That guy used an empty expression, continuing:

“For eternity. The time to wander in Hell for eternity. I will send you there. Send you there. Send you there. Ah ah ah, huhuhuhuhu, ahahahahahah.....Ne, eat him. The world is waiting. Ne, eat him. The world.....”

But, at this moment.

Ryner’s chest.

A hand suddenly leapt out from his chest.

A slender hand.

A pale but slender hand.

That was a woman’s hand.

And Ryner knew that hand too.

It was the hand that appeared in that dream.

The hand of that woman who cried, adored Ryner.

That hand leapt out from Ryner’s chest—no, that hand leapt out from the picture that was imprinted on Ryner’s chest at some point in time, that was like black words.

That hand grabbed Sion’s arm.

“...It’s not... It’s not that time yet? Please stop.”

A voice sounded.

And that was from within Ryner’s body.

A woman’s voice.

It was that woman’s voice.

The voice of that woman that he didn't know, but just by hearing it Ryner felt extremely nostalgic, his tears were about to flow out.

“.....”

But, Ryner couldn't say anything.

He was unable to speak.

He wanted to shout. He wanted to call that woman's name, call Sion's name, but he was unable to say anything.

He only collapsed on the ground weakly.

At this point, Sion tilted his head in doubt.

“Who are you? α ? No, you're not α . Since that isn't the case, then don't get in the way. I will become **Real**. I will eat this... eat the **Solver of All Equations...**”

The woman said:

“Please stop. It is not the time yet? You should be clear too. Please leave. ω . The **Weaver of All Equations...**”

To her questioning...

That person appeared.

Behind Sion.

As if he were...

That guy appeared as if he were standing there from the start.

Golden hair, and a face that was like Ferris's, abnormally good-looking.

It was Lucile Eris.

Lucile was smiling.

“...Ah, I didn’t think that you would do it until this far... It seems like I underestimated you slightly. Duchess “.”

For some reason, Ryner didn’t hear the portion in the middle.

But now wasn’t the time to be thinking about that kind of things.

More importantly, what was happening here?

Why would Lucile appear here?

ω?

The Weaver of All Equations?

Was that referring to Lucile?

But what did that...

But, at this moment the woman spoke:

“Stop him immediately, release Ryner.”

Lucile heard that, shrugged.

“...He wants to eat.”

“But it isn’t the time now.”

“Ah, yes, yes. But, if we miss this chance, you might appear again to stop them. If that’s the case, then we should simply let everything end here now...”

“No. It’s still... not time. The world wouldn’t change because of your pranks... If things were that easy, no one would be hurt... You and I, and the girl you treasure the most... you should be most clear, don’t you? Lucile.”

The woman said. So, Lucile’s expressionless, emotionless face had some slight change.

Then—

“...Ah, that’s right. You are...right.”

“If that’s the case, then stop him.

“...I understand, then we’ll stop.”

“...That’s great, it’s good that you have some sanity left.”

Lucile heard that, turned around. He stared at Ryner's chest.

"Sanity? Ha, haha, hahaha, sanity... sanity huh? Is that your words? I'd like to see that kind of thing from you."

"..."

But the woman didn't reply.

Lucile continued:

"But, Sion is different. He is different from you. He will definitely not lose sanity. He would definitely not lose anything important. So, I chose him. Because no matter how painful, no matter how he cries, no matter how painful his chest is... he will always choose the correct path. So, your opinion..."

At this moment—

"Shut up." The woman said.

But Lucile didn't listen.

He peered at Ryner's face and said:

"That's right, Sion betrayed you. He betrayed you, did you hear that? Are you listening? Ryner Lute. The ugly beast, sad demon..."

"Shut up!"

The woman shouted.

But, Lucile still continued:

Sion betrayed you... and you were betrayed, being in the deeper, more painful depths for eternity..."

"I told you to shut up!!"

The woman yelled loudly.

Lucile heard that, shrugged again.

He laughed. Laughed mockingly, sadly.

He raised his hand.

"...But, it doesn't matter. Continue to play your game of hide-and-seek

friendship. Not only the anguish in his heart, raising the boring flag of justice, shouting about useless love... you only need to have your peaceful sleep as before..."

He said that, using his hand to cover Ryner's face.

In a moment.

His consciousness started to disappear.

The blood that covered the world disappeared, scenery returned to normal, but the scene whitened out, disappearing.

His consciousness seemed to be pulled by something, slowly leaving, leaving, disappeared.

At this moment.

"Ah..."

He could speak.

His voice that had initially disappeared returned.

But, his consciousness was about to fade.

Everything was become white.

In the last vestiges of his fading consciousness.

At the last moment, Ryner still—

".....Sion."

Called his close friend's name.



At this moment...

“...Hey.”

A voice like this sounded.

“Hey.....Hey, wake up!”

A voice like this sounded.

That voice called him to wake up.

But, where did that voice come from?

At this moment—

“Don’t sleep. Wake up!”

Although he heard that voice, but he couldn’t open his eyes. He wanted to sleep, my eyes can’t open at all.

But that voice said again:

“Wake up!”

“...Eh”

“If you continue to sleep here you’ll get a cold. Really, you idiot, wake up!”

At this moment, his neck was grabbed forcefully by someone, his head was forced to raise up.

“...Eeeah... Ah~”

At this moment, I finally opened my eyes.

I opened my eyes, no, it’s attempted to open my eyes. But in that instant, glaring light shone in, making me frown unconsciously, my mind throbbed, I felt like I was unable to open my eyes.

So.

“I want to sleep.”

I said.

“I want to sleep too!”

I was shouted at by that guy.

“Hey, wake up!”

I heard that, forcefully opening my eyes. But, my mind was dull.

It was serious. A seriously tired feeling.

But, I still desperately want to open my eyes. I said “I know” with a small voice, replying that voice that was urging me to wake up, attempting to open my eyes.

Subsequently, I opened my eyes slightly, bit by bit.

So, I found myself in the room that I usually stayed in.

A simple office that had bookshelves and two tables.

I asked:

“...Eh? Why am I here...”

“Are you sleep-addled again?!”

I was shouted at again.

I turned my gaze to the direction of the voice.

So, I saw a very familiar face.

Black hair.

Black eyes.

A slender slightly hunched figure, that was slightly taller than me.

My friend’s face.

My best friend’s face.

That guy always had a sleepy, unmotivated face.

Today he had the same sleepy expression.

“I say, you clearly asked me to come help with work, but you yourself died

first, what does this count for?"

He said that.

But, I replied:

"Eh.....Eh, Ryner..... Why are you here? Aren't you, aren't you..."

But Ryner frowned when he heard that. Knocking my head hard.

"Hey, hey? Are you not awake yet~?"

He asked that.

I looked at Ryner's eyes, staring at his impatient expression in a daze for a while.

".....Eh? I fell asleep?"

At this point, I suddenly discovered it.

Ah, I see.

I fell asleep in the midst of it. Because there was very important work, because there was work that couldn't be finished even though we worked overtime for several days and nights, if that was the case, working alone would be too boring, I simply pulled Ryner along, and this was already the fifth day of working overnight for consecutive days. Just at the time work was about to end.

"...I fell asleep?"

"You fell asleep."

"How long did I sleep?"

"Four hours."

"It can't be?"

"It's true."

"Really really?"

"You're annoying!"

For some reason, Ryner's yell gave Sion a feeling that he had just woken up.

A feeling of returning to reality, finally he could feel the reality of the scene

before him.

But—

Then, what about that?

“...Was all of that... a dream?”

“Eh? Dream?”

Ryner asked. I nodded.

“...Ah... It’s like, like—”

“Uh.”

“It’s like...”

But, at this moment I stopped.

I wanted to speak of the dream I had earlier, but I found that, I couldn’t even remember what dream that was.

“Eh, I forgot?”

“What are you doing!”

“No, I really could remember just now... but...”

Ryner heard that, glared at me with a surprised expression.

“I say Sion.”

“Eh?”

A man wants to tell me about his dream, I feel disgusted.”

He said that.

I heard that, and couldn’t help but laugh.

“Ah... ah, is that right? That’s true.”

“That’s right.”

“I’m sorry.”

“It’s alright, it’s not that bad, in contrast—”

Ryner said, then stopped.

“So?”

He said again.

But I didn’t understand what he meant.

“Eh? So what does that mean?”

So Ryner shrugged.

“I mean your dream. Was it an uncomfortable dream? Or a good dream?”

He asked me that.

I thought about it again.

But I still couldn’t remember the contents of the dream. I only knew one thing.

That dream was really—

“...I feel that it wasn’t a good dream.”

“Really?”

“Eh.”

“Then it’s good that I woke you up.”

I laughed again when I heard that.

“Eh, thankfully you woke me up, thank you.”

Ryner laughed too.

“Actually it’s like this~ You said something like “heh heh heh, being surrounded by the chests of mature women, I’m really too blessed~” and things like that, so honestly speaking, I still hesitated on whether I should wake you up.”

“I said something like that?”

“You said it.”

“Oh no... my tastes have been completely found out...”

“Ugh, you admitted it so simply, it’s not fun at all...”

“Ahaha.”

I heard, then laughed again.

Then looked at the clock in the room.

It was already six in the morning. If what Ryner said was true, then I had slept from two o'clock till now.

I should also mention, the deadline for the work was nine o'clock, there were three hours left.

"...Then, we should continue working?"

I said. Ryner heard that, showed an impatient expression.

He knocked on the documents on my table hard.

"It's already done. So you can go to the adjacent room immediately, get in bed and sleep!"

He said that.

"Eh?"

I looked at Ryner's face, then looked at the documents on the table.

The documents had all been settled, the plans were arranged too.

I raised my head to look at Ryner again. So, he still had that sleepy expression.

I stared at that lazy face and said:

"...Eh? That, it can't be that you finished it all yourself?"

"Eh."

"Why?"

"Because there wasn't much time left till the deadline, what other way did I have?"

"B, but, why did you yourself... why didn't you call me..."

But Ryner interrupted me.

The expression on his face tightened as if it was troublesome, for some reason, he turned his gaze away deliberately.

"Ah, how annoying, I called you but you didn't wake up."

He said that.

But, he was lying.

It was a statement that could be seen through easily.

It was obvious just by looking.

So, I laughed again.

So, I wanted to cry again.

So, I felt blissful again.

Just because of this trivial matter.

Just because of this small matter, why did I have this kind of feelings? It was too unimaginable.

Although I had such a dark dream, even though I saw despair, shouted that it was painful, but because of this small...

Just because of this small steady feeling, my mood was returned to normal.

So, I looked at Ryner and said:

“Thank you.”

Ryner heard that, he frowned even harder.

I laughed again.

“Thank you, Ryner.”

“Really, you’re annoying annoying! Forget it, hurry up and sleep!”

I nodded when I heard that.

“There’s no need, I’ve already slept for four hours, I can continue to work with you now.”

“I haven’t sleeaaaaaaaaaaaaept?!”

Ryner shouted.

A usual scene.

The usual progression.

I laughed again.

I laughed again.

I laughed desperately, I laughed until if I didn't take note of it, my tears would overflow.

“...”

But.

But, at this moment I discovered again.

This was not right.

This image.

This scene.

It was already a memory of the past.

It was the dream scene that I would constantly dream of.

A dream that I would have, as long I thought of crying.

A dream that I would have when I felt sad, when I felt depressed.

In truth...

In truth, everything had ended already.

That period that I initially thought would continue forever, wouldn't return again.

Yes.

Because there was no eternity.

No matter how I shouted.

No matter how I cried, give me a little time.

There was no way to gain “eternity”.

Time flowed, gears turned.

Pushing my back, wanting me to go forward.

The time had reached already.

I had to wake up from the dream.

The world was waiting.

Reality was waiting.

So, I had to wake up from the dream.

So, I had to open my eyes.

I clearly knew this concept.

I clearly knew it was like that.

But.

But, Ryner, I...

I...

“.....I’m depressed.....”

Sion Astal said that.

Opened his eyes again.

So, he discovered that he was in the rain.

The sky was dark. The rain gradually got heavier, his tears were washed away.

No, he should say that his tears had already dried up.

Sion couldn’t differentiate whether that was tears or rain.

But, he still closed his eyes again.

So as to stop the tears.

So as to stop the meaningless tears.

So as to stop the meaningless rain.

Sion shut his eyes.

But, after he shut his eyes, there was no dream in the darkness before him.

That previous time wouldn't come back.

Now was the time to go forward.

The time to make a choice, go forward.

“...Go forward.”

Sion opened his eyes, moving his golden eyes to look beneath him,

He saw Ryner.

Ryner who had lost consciousness.

The black hair that was always sleep-mussed was drenched by the rain, even his clothes were wet too.

If he continued to stay here...

“...You'll get a cold...”

Sion said softly.

Then, he took out a blade from his waist. Looking at the knife, the blade that had water droplets running on it reflected his own figure.

An expressionless, empty reflection.

“...”

It was a human's reflection. It was still a human's reflection, it was a human figure that hadn't been completely engulfed by that.

So, the thing he had to do now was to make a choice according to his own judgement.

“...”

Sion grabbed the knife hard, then slowly lowered the knife.

Slowly, slowly, pressing the knife on Ryner's neck.

Following that, he only had to push the knife in.

Following that, he only had to push the knife in slightly.

Everything would end because of this.

His troubles would end because of this.

Ryner would be saved because of this.

“...”

This couldn't continue. If this continued, Ryner would become immortal. He would become the monster's offering, suffering for eternity, despairing for eternity and that would continue, he would fall into the endless darkness.

If he didn't kill him now.

If he didn't kill Ryner now.

Now—

“.....Kill him.”

Sion ordered himself to move, injecting strength into the hand holding the knife.

“.....Kill him.”

It didn't matter whatever the world became.

Other things didn't matter.

To save his friend... to save his best friend...

".....I have to kill him."

His hand was trembling. The hand holding the knife was trembling.

More.

Just press the knife down more.

Everything could end because of this.

"....."

He looked at Ryner, memories swam in his mind momentarily. The unnecessary memories swam in his mind again. The rain should have dried off, his tears should have been dried up, but, meaningless memories swam in his mind.

The first time they met each other.

The first time they laughed.

Unnecessary memories spun in his mind.

A lazy face. A sleepy face. An unmotivated face. An angry face. This guy said with an angry face—he said, it's not an illusion. He said, you've done enough.

He clearly didn't know anything. He clearly didn't know what I've always been doing? Clearly didn't know how much I betrayed you? You clearly don't know anything. Clearly didn't know anything.

But that guy said—I wouldn't give up on you.

He said, let's go.

He said, I'm going to pull you out from there, from that darkness.

Always having the face that seemed as if it was annoyed. Always having that sleepy face. Always having that angry face. Even so, in the end it still smiled at me.

So.

So I—

“...I’m going to get you from the darkness...”

The rain was pouring.

The rain was pouring.

Grabbing the knife hard, reaching towards Ryner’s throat.

“From the darkness... I’m going to save you from the darkness...”

But, at this moment...

“...”

He didn’t speak.

The knife was unable to get... Ryner’s life.

Ryner was still sleeping.

Sion stared at that face.

Stared at his friend’s, that foolish like, best friend’s face that had lost consciousness, Sion laughed sadly.

He let go of the knife.

The knife fell to the ground like that. Making a resounding clang sound, falling on the ground.

But, Ryner still didn’t wake up. Having that lazy face like usual, the appearance of sleeping very happily, as if there were no uneasiness, sleeping innocently.

This face was the same as the first time he came to know him. From the time that Sion first knew this guy, he was always sleepy, no signs of motivation.

Sion laughed when he saw this. Laughing sadly, with endless affection.

He stood up.

“...Ah, damnit... you win. I wasn’t able to kill this guy...”

He said that.

So, the voice suddenly spoke.

The voice spoke from inside his body.

The voice of the other him.

That voice said:

“No one... no one won. You are me.”

“.....Haha.”

Sion laughed, his tone sounded like it was sobbing, filled with self-mocking.

“...That’s true, you are me.”

“Eh.”

“.....I...we, are weak...”

“Eh, but we still have to go forward.”

“Betray our friends?”

“...”

“Take our friends as offerings, go forward?”

“...”

“...Take our friends as live offerings, push our friends into Hell, then go forward?”

“...Yes.”

“It’s untolerable.”

“Eh.”

“I cannot tolerate that.”

“Eh.”

“But, but even killing Ryner... I am a coward that can’t even kill Ryner...”

“You’ve already done well.”

“...Nonsense.”

“Don’t burden yourself.”

“...Nonsense.”

“Your decision wasn’t...”

“Don’t say nonsense! What do you understand?! What on earth do you understand?!”

Sion shouted.

Sion shouted in the rain.

His heart was about to die, if this continued, his heart would die. Despair would bury his soul, be devoured by the darkness, by the black darkness.

No.

It was already impossible!

It was already—

“...I want to disappear.”

At that moment, the voice of the other person said sadly:

“...Is that so?”

“...Eat me. Let me disappear. My heart... is offered to you.”

“...Eh, I understand. Rest assured. You don’t need to be troubled anymore. Following this... I will be responsible for the rest.”

“...I’m sorry.”

“Eh. Then, disappear.”

Sion nodded.

Closed his eyes.

So.

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

Following that, Sion opened his eyes again.

He ate the sadness from inside, and came out.

It was still the sound of rain outside.

It was still darkness outside.

He looked at his feet.

He saw the companion by his feet.

His friend.

His best friend.

The living offering.

Despair.

Sion looked at despair, pressing his chest, as expected his heart was dying.
The darkness was going to cover his spirit.

He wanted to cry.

He wanted to vomit.

He wanted to shout.

Save me, save me, save me, save me!

Who can save me from this kind of suffering, from this kind of sadness—

He wanted to shout this.

But.

Even so...

“...I, am going forward.”

Sion said this.

He said it to the other him who had disappeared into his chest.

To the other him who had a sweet dream, had a sad dream:

“...It’s fine. I’m fine. I am, going forward...”

So, he went forward.

In the rain.

In the heavy rain.

Walked opposite to the darkness.

Suddenly, he stopped.

He stopped.

Looked back.

“...We... we won’t meet again, but... being able to see you one last time is great, Ryner.”

He muttered.

But, Ryner didn’t wake up.

The rain was so heavy, but he slept as if he were very comfortable.

Sion laughed when he saw that.

He laughed seemingly happily.

Then.

Then he—

“.....Farewell.”

He walked forward again.

He didn't turn back again.

Because if he turned back, he would waver.

So, he wouldn't ever—

“.....”

He wouldn't turn back ever again.



So, the world's scene changed in a breath.

Epilogue: The Awakening of a King

Part 1

“...”

He had no idea how long he slept.

He did not have even the faintest idea.

There was no sense of time.

All he knew that he slept for a long time.

His arms, body all felt really numb. Looking at how unreactive his muscles were, perhaps it had been 2 days?

No, maybe he had been sleeping for around 3 days.

His eyes felt heavy, and he felt that it was so difficult to open them.

However, Ryner,

“...Nn”

He still opened his eyes.

And he lifted his eyes to the sky.

However, the rain stopped falling.

Sion was no around.

The assassin was nowhere to be seen.

No, that was not all. He was not outside the house.

“...Fm.”

Ryner looked around.

He found that this was a place he saw before.

It was a room made of icy cold stones and metal grills.

That was a jail cell.

And it was the cell Ryner stayed in for 2 years in place of Kiefer.

“Erm...what exactly is going on here?”

Saying this, Ryner supported his upper body, and felt his shoulders and arms aching.

“It hurts.”

He frowned.

Ryner looked at his arms and shoulders, and found that they were all bandaged.

“...Ah~, I see. So I was burnt by that guy who was burning like fire...but someone dealt with it for me.”

Right. The wounds caused by Sion’s subordinates were carefully dealt with.

And then,

“That guy said that he wanted to kill me...but he never did.”

Ryner felt uninterested as he grumbled.

And then, he checked on his current location.

However, there was no need to think about that.

“...I’m imprisoned, right?”

But why?

He sat down on the floor with his legs folded, his arms folded as he thought of a reason.

The reason would probably be because of what happened that night.

That incident that happened on that rainy night. No, that incident that happened who knew how many days ago.

The incident that night.

What exactly, was that about?

“...”

Was that something happening in reality?

Sion became really weird and took out a weird black sword. A woman's arm came flying out from the chest, and the surroundings vanished. It was a scene that had no sense of realism...

"Eh? What? Was that a dream?"

Ryner asked himself, but the bandage on his arms and shoulders negated his doubts.

That was reality.

Sion tried to kill Ryner...

That was the truth.

"..."

Ryner went silent.

Too many things happened in a short while, and his mind could not function freely at the moment. However, that was still a fact in the end.

"...Really, if only it was a dream."

Ryner said with a tired voice.

But it was not a dream.

It was reality.

Sion looked like he was involved in some ridiculous situation.

But what exactly was it? What happened to that guy...

"..."

But at this moment, Ryner shook his head.

"No no, I'm wrong here. Now's not the time to think about this."

There was something more important than this.

At this point, Sion was involved in some incident; who was the woman who reached her arm out from the chest; who exactly Lucille was; all the ridiculous things like 'alpha' and 'omega', but none of them was important.

Currently, the most important thing—

“...”

The most important issue was that guy.

Sion was bawling like a fool.

That guy was wincing painfully as he cried like an idiot.

He needed help, he wanted to run away, but that idiot tried to bear all responsibility himself.

That idiot, who often liked to bully others, who nagged a lot, would not say anything when it came to important things.

That guy, really,

“What was that idiot doing?”

Ryner frowned as he said.

He stood up, and his shoulders and arms that were burnt started hurting again. He opened the bandages wrapped around his arms slightly to look beneath, and found that there were severe burns underneath.

“...Wow, no wonder it hurts so much...will they leave scars?”

There would be some sort of limit in recovery even if healing magic arrays were used.

If it can't not be treated, ahh~, well,

“I'll just complain to Sion next time.”

Part 2

After he murmured that, he straightened his arm, rotating his shoulder, of course a flare of pain immediately passed through, but he didn't care about it, continuing to move. Although he felt that his skin was slightly tight, but it didn't seem like it would cause too large of a problem.

"Good... I can still move, that's great."

This fact made Ryner sigh a breath of relief, nodding.

If he wasn't able to move then it would a bit of a pain.

Because the situation after today might become more troublesome.

He wasn't even clear about what situation it was currently.

But at least he knew that he was in jail. Even so, if he didn't leave this place first there wasn't anything needed to be said.

"I think Sion wouldn't come to see me?"

Because he tried to kill me, and put me in jail.

If I escape jail, not only will he not come to see me, he may even dispatch pursuing soldiers, catching me back here again.

"...Urgh, then that would be meaningless... Ah, that means, I can't go to see Sion again... Then, after I leave here what should I do? Talking about which..."

Why am I jailed here?

That was the source of the problem.

In that night, Sion who had strangely turned into someone else—

"...Saying that he was going to eat me, and some other strange things..."

If I remember correctly, he should have wanted to eat the **Solver of All**

Equations, becoming something like a *shin*^[1].

Then, what was that ?

Was it a god?

Or was it truth?

Ah, forget it, he didn't know what was going on, but what he could confirm was, Sion had been involved in something strange.

“...The **Heroes' Relics** or something, right?”

Or else he wouldn't have a logical explanation. At least, that sort of ability wasn't something that could be done with the current magic technical skills.

Even **Alpha Stigma** was unable to see through, the construct of the power flowing beneath Sion's skin.

“...The **Heroes' Relics**... No, that is the existence of something like a demon king or demon or god or something that appears in current fairytales, right... It was probably like that. If Sion was involved in those kinds of veeeeee~ry troublesome things... But if that was the case, how should I save him?”

Ryner hugged in arms in contemplation again.

The monster in fairytales or legends.

How should he deal with this opposition? And there would be pursuers in Roland, he wouldn't be able to move freely, even so, he should simply— “...Leave this country first...”

There were a few leads.

There were a few key points.

The Weaver of All Equations.

The Solver of All Equations.

α , and ω .

Door.

Key.

The red monster in the dream.

The key phrase that he didn't know was truth or god.

And this—

“...”

Ryner shut his eyes, then opened them again.

So, a red five-pointed star appeared in the middle of his black eyes.

“This is the clue...”

With only these information, perhaps he could find something from outside the country.

No, he should say, he could only understand the situation from outside the country.

Ryner had already investigated this pair of eyes in this country for several years, he investigated the stories or legends in various areas, and investigated piles of mountains of books and ancient scripts. But he still turned up with nothing. No matter how he searched, he couldn't find a slightest lead.

But, if he went to another country.

Like...

“If I went to Gastark...”

Ryner revealed a bitter expression again.

“Gastark?”

He said as if moaning.

He didn't have a good impression of Gastark at all. Lafra was killed, Pueka was killed, not only that, their enemies included Ryner in the Cursed Eyes bearers. Under this sort of situation, requesting for the other party to give information, he would probably be killed?

Ryner thought, and couldn't help but scrunch up his brow.

“...Can't I not hope for those people... But, those people knew the phrase the **Solver of All Equations** too... I think I can only go on the trip?”

He moaned as if he felt extremely troubled again.

Urgh, but, there were many things that could be prioritized before that.

Yes.

Things that could still be prioritized.

Ryner thought, smiling widely unconsciously, then touching his own neck.

His neck that had no scars.

His neck that wasn't sliced open by the knife.

"...You idiot Sion... I'm going to make you regret not killing me."

Ryner said, slowly reaching out to touch the iron grilles. He used his whole strength, attempting to bend the iron grilles. Of course the iron bars remained unmoving.

"...Speaking of which, no matter what I want to do, it's all meaningless if I don't leave here first... Ugh, what should I do now?"

Ryner knew, there wasn't any way of escaping through the iron bars.

This wasn't a normal cell. It was a prison that professionally jailed a few vicious offenders, only accepting first class war criminals or serial killers and the sort, people with evil natures, the cell was so securely guarded that it was nearly abnormal.

These iron bars and the four walls had layers and layers of magic resistant magic arrays laid upon it, a large portion of magic would lose effectiveness.

Even so, then were the iron grilles able to handle any physical shocks? Actually if not, the counter-measures on prison officers' side were very secure too, honestly speaking, Ryner wasn't able to make any movements from inside the cell.

Even so, what should he do?

At this moment, Ryner smiled.

"...Hey~ Guard ojii-san~ Are you there?"

He called loudly.

In the past when Ryner was locked in here he came to recognize a guard who

eventually became good friends with him, he didn't know if that uncle was still working here, if he was, then perhaps he could take the opportunity to slip away...

But at this moment.

"You criminal, you're noisy! Be quiet!"

The voice of a man that Ryner had never heard before sounded.

"...Ah. That Guard-oji-san is no longer working here..."

It seemed, things had become even more challenging?

Did he need to sweet talk the new guard, taking the chance when he leaned over, grab his neck, lock his joints, threaten him, if he didn't want to die then hand out the keys? Urgh, even if he opened the iron grilles, there were still so many guards back there, the situation would be extremely challenging.

Ryner imagined every situation that would happen after that in his mind.

"Wow, as I think and think about it I feel like always lying here and sleeping afternoon naps..."

Ryner couldn't help sighing as he said.

Even if things weren't so complicated, in truth Ryner was so unmotivated to the stage where he protested against the existence of the word 'motivation'.

Why did people have to be so motivated? Was there something wrong with this world?

Ryner grumbled in his heart.

Then he sighed deeply again.

Then he took a large breath.

Then released it.

At last he raised his head—

"...But, not solving every task one by one, there wouldn't be any hope... even so, then I'll risk a gamble."

He put his face close to the bars, then yelled:

“Ah, ah, my stomach hurts! Someone, someone come save meeeeeeeeeeee!”

So not far from Ryner, but in a place where Ryner couldn't see the guard's voice spoke.

“You're too noisy!”

Ryner heard and said:

“No, no, it's true! My stomach really hurts! Doctor, find a doctor...”

“Stop lying! I already know the plots of you people!”

“Wow, I'm that! It's an infectious disease...”

“Alright, alright, just vomit now.”

“I'm serious! This isn't a petty illness... Four hours after it activates, if nothing is done, it will become airborne?”

“...Eh? Ah, no... I, idiot, I wouldn't be tricked by you!”

“I'm serious! Oh no. I, it's almost four hours...”

“...Ah?”

“Hurry! Call a doctor quickly! I'm not doing this for myself! It's for your own good!”

“...You, you aren't lying, right?”

“I said I'm not!”

“...Che! You're so troublesome. Wait for a moment.”

Following that he heard the sound of the guard running off.

I~idiot. Ryner scolded in his heart.

It seemed like the first stage could possibly be crossed. Wait for the doctor to come, then grab the doctor's neck, threatening to kill him...

Then, at this moment.

“Aaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh?!”

A scream sounded.

And that was the cry of the guard that had just went to call the doctor.

“Eh? What happened?”

Ryner tried to see what was going on from behind the iron grilles. But, he couldn't see it.

“Hey? Guard ojii-san?”

“ ”
...

But, there was no reply.

Hey, what is it? What happened..."

Then, Ryner's voice was interrupted.

Bang!!

The sound of something exploding was heard, at the same time—

“You, what are you...aaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!”

It was a scream again.

“Urgh, what is it? What is going on...”

But—

Clang!!

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!”

The noise and scream sounded nearer to Ryner than the first scream.

It was at the side.

It came from the adjacent cell.

Ryner heard that.

“...Hey hey hey! Something bad seems to have happened...”

But, Ryner didn't finish speaking, when that came.

The right wall of the cell Ryner was shut in—in the middle of an extremely thick wall made from stone that was stronger than steel, and any magic couldn't pass through it, made a weird bang noise, something like a sharp blade jumped out.

“Ah?”

Ryner made a stunned noise when he saw this, at the same time that thing at an abnormal speed, started to move left and right, up and down suddenly along the wall.

At last, the wall made a bong noise, the whole thing collapsing.

But, Ryner didn't feel surprised anymore.

Because there was only one person who could do something like this.

The wall that had completely collapsed.

Ryner looked ahead.

So he saw the person that he had expected.

Long golden hair, in addition to a pair of slim and clear blue eyes.

And a nearly abnormally perfect features.

Ryner told the arrival:

“...Yo, Ferris, you came to save...”

Then, he didn't manage to finish his sentence.

Ferris's sword swung over at a vicious speed, Ryner wasn't able to dodge in time, his face was struck.

In the end, Ryner made the same scream as the others. His whole person was sent flying, knocking into the iron bars, then sliding to the ground.

“...That... urgh... why did you have to do that?”

Ryner kept his position on the ground, raising his head to look at Ferris.

Ferris said with a serious expression:

“That should be what I am saying!”

“Ah?”

“What are you, what are you doing here?!”

She said with a strong voice that she never used before.

Ryner heard that.

“...No... That, like you saw, I’m in jail.”

“Why did you land yourself in jail by yourself, without my permission?”

“Ugh, by myself...”

Then, at this moment.

She suddenly had tears rolling down her face.

“Eh?”

Ryner couldn’t help making a stunned sound.

Because, because this was his first time seeing her cry.

She was always expressionless, she shouldn’t cry.

“I was always... I was always looking for you! Sion said you were already dead... Sion laughed and said he killed you... But, I didn’t believe it, I was always looking for you!”

She shouted angrily like that, then raised her sword high.

Ryner frantically stood up when he saw that.

“No, that, use your sword to strike later...”

Then, she threw the sword to one side, running over directly to hug Ryner.

“Ah!”

Ryner made a foolish sound again.

But she trembled in Ryner’s hold.

“...I thought you were dead... I thought you were really dead...”

She was shaking.

In Ryner’s hold, she was shaking slightly.

Ryner didn’t know what to do, waving his hands in the empty air for a while...

Then—

“...”

He gently stroked her head, then hugged her back.

Her back was still trembling.

“...Ah~ How embarrassing... I’m sorry. You must have been very scared, being alone?”

“...”

She was shaking. Shaking unceaselessly.

Things were so serious that they made her tremble this much.

Ryner said:

“...You saw...Sion?”

So, she nodded silently.

“Then?”

“...He...he became very strange... He laughed and said, he k, killed you, laughing with an expression as if he were going mad, nearly crying...”

“I said you were lying, I said you shouldn’t be able to kill Ryner, but, he, he only kept laughing...”

“...”

“He said, don’t interfere anymore... Don’t come to the capital again...”

“...”

“And that person started to invade Imperial Nelpha. Attacking our allied country Nelpha. Killing all the enemy, the people, even the women, kids were all killed.”

“...”

“And the people in the country were enthusiastic about his movements. Saying he was the Hero King, saying he was the Hero King that would place the world in his hands, saying the whole world, everything in the whole world was Roland’s... Saying that they would kill all, kill all people who interfered...”

“...”

“...They’re mad... Everyone’s mad... Sion, and everyone... the whole country is crazy...”

“...”

“But, but even you disappeared... At the most important moment, you always, always...”

At this moment, Ryner stroked Ferris’s hair lightly again, stroking her who continuously trembled, gently stroking her head.

“...It’s alright, Ferris. I’m not dead yet.”

But, she still continued to shake.

“...But, but Sion he, Sion he changed...”

Then—

“It’s alright... This isn’t a problem too.”

Ryner stroked her head again.

Ryner comforted her, but his eyes were looking in a different direction.

“...”

There was a stain in the corner of the white walls of the cell.

He stared at the light black stain as if he were glaring.

His mind started to move continuously, spinning quickly until he even felt he had a headache.

The things that he had seen in the past.

The things he had seen but had ignored.

Sion’s face. Ferris’s face. Everyone laughing together, but that was already a matter of the past.

Then, what should he do? What should he do after today?

His thoughts started to spin.

Spun ceaselessly.

The things they had to do after today. The things that they had to do. The

things that they must do.

From small matters to large matters.

Continuously, ceaselessly spinning.

The invasion in Nelpha. Mass massacre.

“...”

Do you have to be like this?

Do you have to turn into this? Sion.

Then, what should I do?

To stop Sion, to stop that person, what should I do?

On one side is the king of a country, the king of the largest country in the southern continent.

On the other side is a lowly person in a prison cell.

Can a lowly person stop that person?

At this moment.

“...Hey, Ryner.”

Ferris shouted softly.

“It’s alright. You don’t have to worry so much.”

Ryner said, then gently caressed her head again.

Yes.

There wasn’t any need to worry.

Alright. I understand. Let’s gamble on this.

Because I have already decided not to run.

If not making anyone cry is a delusion.

If not hurting anyone is a delusion.

If that really is an unreal delusion.

If it was really like that, then let’s gamble on it!

Stop Sion.

Save that person.

Now they had to think of a plan to gain the power to accomplish this huge mission.

“...I want to leave this country, Ferris.”

Ryner said.

She raised her head when she heard that.

“Leave this country?”

Ryner nodded, releasing Ferris.

“Yeah, I want to save Sion. Come with me.”

“U-Uh-huh. But, you really want to...”

“I want to save Sion. So I said you don’t have to worry. Don’t cry anymore.”

“I, I’m not crying.”

“Ahaha.”

“You, you!”

“Eh? Ah, that, I wasn’t laughing at you.....Don’t pick up the sword!”

Ryner yelled, following that he sighed sadly again.

He released Ferris, his emotions starting to flutter again.

There were really many things that he had to do.

If that guy had really ran so far, the first thing to do was to catch up first.

To reach this goal, what did he need?

“...”

Ryner narrowed his eyes sharply.

Glaring at the stain on the wall sharply.

If it were that far.

If the distance was so great, then slowly, approach it step by step.

To save you, if the power of an ant was not enough, then become a person.

If the person's strength was still not enough, then become a king.

If that was still not enough to carry the burden on your shoulders.

I'll play your character.

We had an agreement.

An agreement to progress together.

We made a promise.

I said I wouldn't give up on you.

We made a promise.

I said before, even if you sink into a deeper darkness, I will pull you back.

So—

"So I too..."

Ryner said.

He said with a voice that was soft and slow, but as if people from afar could still hear:

"...So I will walk forward too, Sion."

Ryner said as if he were facing Sion.



So, that became the starting of everything—

The southern Hero King's.

The northern Hero King's.

And the last person, the start... of the legend of the third king.

1.  Both 'god' and 'truth' can be pronounced with *shin* as the first syllable.

Afterword

Wu, what should I write?

Eh, first I want to say, thank you everyone for your support thus far.

Then, just like that.

Just like that, the first series “Densetsu no Yuusha no Densetsu” has ended.

Those who have read this series of course know of what I am saying, so let me say that the ending of the first series does not mean the end of the story, it can even be said that, after today we will be going into the main topic, it’s like that. Finally I can write scenes that I want to describe in this series.

Ah—what a long story. Actually I already wanted to write these scenes, so I worked hard till now, it’s really great. Ah, this afterword is written under the condition that the readers finish reading the book first. (Ah, but I won’t leak any of the story content in the afterword, rest assured.) Really, if it weren’t for everyone’s support, I couldn’t have made it with only determination as a motivation, I wouldn’t have patiently written out eleven volumes.

So, first and foremost I will thank all of my readers.

I have already written eleven volumes.

If it were to me, I will feel like someone who is boasting, but that I was able to tolerate until now and reach today, it’s really due to everyone who was willing to read my work.

Other than that, I have to thank my editor who has been supporting me who has not been on task until now, Saori-san who has been in charge of the illustration, the editorial team, and the correcting officers, printing staff, and the book stores who have helped me to create advertisements and posters, family and friends, as well as the support of many people’s support, The Legend

of the Heroes has been able to reach thus far.

So, firstly I would like to say thank you.

I'm very grateful.

My grateful feelings will be halted for now.

Next I will do a little explanation of my story.

I think the readers of my story will understand naturally, yes, truthfully this work is a story written towards them.

A story written for the three of them.

As for who these three people are, I will explain it in the last few sentences of the afterword, so before reading the book, please don't accidentally read that part.

But talking about which, in this first series of eleven volumes, the story is really about the two of the three people.

The story begins, then stops midway.

Following that, the real new story will begin. I predict that the development of the story after today will be very fast. I truly deliberately slowed down the pace in the beginning, especially on the part about relations between people, I slowly, slowly constructed the foundation, so from now on, the development of the story will be very fast.

The content of the story is slowly approaching the core.

From the end of the story, I estimate that there will be ten books (whether it is long or short it depends on what everyone thinks), I will carry a strong determination, work hard to write every page well, so that everyone will not feel annoyed, so, everyone please continue to advice me!

Talking about which, a work that has a total of twenty one volumes really needs everyone to follow determinedly, or else they would be unable to continue, so I really have to ask everyone to continue supporting me!

But, walking me for so long, everyone must feel very pained? When the main

story reaches twenty one volumes, the short stories will also continue at the same time, at this rate, how many volumes will there be?

Wu, let me calculate for a moment.

Ah, isn't there twenty five books for the short stories?

This way, the short stories and the main story combined will be forty six books in total? Stupid! (Laugh) Ah, this way, that will be a scary number~ The shelves in the book store will be occupied by me.

As for how long I can withstand, apart from my body, the most important thing is the passion of the readers.

But, I myself really had a shock.

That my body can withstand until this long with this work, if I can continue I will be surprised too.

Because I myself have never seen a series of works that was completed with more than ten volumes!

But, the Legend of the Heroes has already made till its eleventh volume.

If we combine it with the short story, at present there will be nineteen books, that everyone can patiently follow me, that's really amazing.

Because, I myself am unable to finish reading more than ten books, but everyone has already read nineteen books, there were even people telling me to quickly finish my new work.

These people are really amazing.

In total there are nineteen books? Everyone is amazing!

I'm so touched that I want to cry! (Laugh)

But I really can't find the words to express my gratitude, I really have to thank everyone who loves the Legend of the Heroes.

I will continue to work hard at writing, so that I do not disappoint everyone's love.

I will work hard to write a good work, so that everyone will not regret having

their bookshelves filled with my books.

I will work hard always, so that I can stretch the time that I have with everyone, having a happy time with everyone, so after today please continue to advice me!

Alright.

I will stop here about the topic of the ending of the first series.

Ah, I will do a bit more explanation for my work, about what was raised in volume 10 and 11, but I have not written what happened in Roland during that one year.

About Ryner, Sion, Ferris the three of them noisily passing the one year that content, at the moment I will be writing that in the short stories, so everyone please read the short stories. About the short stories, at the moment “The Legend of the Legendary Heroes Anyway: Volume 8 Wonderland Authority” has began the Roland arch.

About the content of the missing year, it will be released in a short story after today, as I write this afterword, in truth the short stories has already reached thirteen volumes. After today they will continue to be sold, so everyone please give your opinions freely.

Those people who can't wait can read Dragon Magazine, Ryner and Sion will do a series of foolish things in there (Laugh).

In the short story that will be sold following this “The Legend of the Legendary Heroes Anyway Volume 9”, there will be a scene that Milk can see, a short excerpt about the boy she knows, and it has a strong relationship with the main story, a work called the trilogy.

Other than that, there is something called “salty dango”, it will about the first time that Ferris ate dangos, finally it has been accepted into the Dragon Magazine's fantasy short stories, please look forward to it.

Other than that~ About the other merchandise or various information they will be reported in the Dragon Magazine, or on my personal website [Kagami Takaya's healthy lifestyle], so please look to it.

The advertisement will end, actually there were only three pages for this afterword.

But, as I mentioned in the previous afterword of the short story, we will do a report of the poll for the characters, and a thank you section for the end of the first series.

“Can the number of pages for the first volume be increased?”

I tried to negotiate with the editor, and it succeeded!

Awesome!

So, we will continue with the work of the most popular seven people from the poll in “The Legend of the Legendary Heroes Volume 8”.

The first six people will be announced!

If you want to know about the result of the poll for after the seventh person, please look at the afterword in “The Legend of the Legendary Heroes Anyway Volume 8”, the results almost had the feelings of the nominees written there.

Then, the person who had more votes than one of the female leading characters in the Legend of the Heroes series, more than Milk who was seventh who will it be!

The ranking is shown!

Sixth place: Miran Froade.

“... Oh? It’s me? I’m really honoured. Thank you. But to be in the sixth position... Sixth? Then it means that I have been too attention grabbing. I have to control myself. But, at least let me straightforwardly express my feelings of happiness.”

The one who faintly smiled as he answered, as Major Miran Froade who carried the darkness of the Roland Empire.

He was very popular, the people who liked him should be those kind of people who had a strong fortitude?

Saori-san who was in charge of the illustrations after she read the afterword of "The Legend of the Legendary Heroes Volume 8" called me.

"Froaude? What is Froaude's ranking?!"

"Ah? Froaude? That, he should be in the front of the ranks?"

"Great!"

Saori-san seems to be one of the fans who are supporting Froaude passionately, the degree of her passion was even shown in this conversation, his popularity is really high.

In the end, will his ranking continue to rise?

He really is a dark horse.

Then next—

Fifth place: Claugh Klom.

"Oh, oh, really? Me? This is slightly troubling. Am I so welcomed? Then Calne what rank are you?"

"..."

"Eh? Eh eh? What is it?"

"...Uuuuu~ I really feel the people who voted for such~ a disappointing Claugh-senpai must be wrong."

"Don't be bias, don't be bias."

"Wu wu wu~ Isn't it like that? Or did Noa-san send a few hundred voting cards?"

"Eh? I didn't send anything."

"So I said that this is my potential. Aside from that, thank you every..."

"Don't mind proud Claugh-senpai's words, everyone you have to vote for me?"

Alright? You have to write Calne on the voting slip..."

"What are you talking about..."

"What does it matter? Claugh-senpai is already fifth! Let me say..."

"Alright, go to one side, then, thank you every... Ouch! I'll kick you further than eighteen thousand miles away!"

"Save me, Noa-san."

"Eh, eh, eh?"

"Ah, you're cunning..."

"Heh heh~ Eh."

These people are really, completely ignoring my position, playing happily by themselves, so we won't mind them, let us continue.

Sion's right hand, Major-General Crimson Fingered Claugh Klom. The other companions by his side, including Calne, Noa were all on the ranks, it can be seen that these people's popularity are quite high.

Anyway, Claugh was slightly ahead of Froaude by a little, gaining fifth place, it can be seen that the two of these seem to be the more popular characters among Sion's group.

Many male readers, especially, voted for Claugh.

Next—

Fourth: Sion Astal.

"Ah, that's great. The results are not bad. Thank you everyone. But, fourth... I got fourth, that's interesting, who will be above me? Wu."

The youth smiled happily, it was the young king of Roland Sion Astal. His popularity was high, he could be called one of the aces in the Legend of the

Heroes.

Due to the continuing story, his votes will probably rise, in the end perhaps he will have a stunning number of votes, but at moment he is ranked like this.

Next—

Third: Ferris Eris.

“Wha, what!! I, I, I surpassed the Dango God, who ranked at fourteenth place, with third place? You wrote your votes wrongly! No. This can’t be. If this continues, the feelings of the Dango God... Ry, Ryner, quickly go buy a pile of voting cards for me! I have to increase the ranking of the Dango God.”

“I say you... Thank everyone first.”

“Wu? Ah, yes... Ah, that, I, am happy.”

“Ah? Are you sure you’re happy?”

“Mm-hmm.”

“Then that’s good.”

“That’s good.”

With a usual emotionless face, slightly happy was one of the main female characters of the Legend of Heroes, Ferris Eris...

“Idiot author! This is not the time to be speaking nonsense! If you don’t go and buy the voting cards back, the dango gods will really... Alright, alright, Sion, taxes! Increase the taxes by ten times, buy a large number of voting cards!”

“Eh eh eh~? That can’t be done, Ferris.”

“Don’t talk nonsense, go quickly!”

“Ri~ght.”

So, she grabbed Sion’s collar and left, so the events stopped here.

Her personality did not put anyone in her consideration, but she received much support from the female and male readers, what is the reason?

Next—

Finally it's the second place!

Second: Ryner Lute.

“Oh~ Really? That's unexpected. That means, my likeable self is like that? I always felt that I was controlling this whole story. How do I say it? The charisma I released when I was sleeping healed the whole world? Is it like that? I want to sleep. Sleeping.”

Like usual saying those unmotivated words, it was the main character of this work Ryner Lute.

The main character cannot be hidden indeed! Between the number of votes he received with the third place there was a difference of almost one time, attaining a crushing victory!

But!

But, a problem appeared here!

Yes. Ryner isn't first. Then who is first? Everyone must have their suspicions, is there someone who will be more popular than Ryner or Sion, Ferris? Sion felt incredulous earlier, didn't he?

There is someone like that.

Because of the large number of voting cards received, there was a strange nameless person who actually received first place.

Even the editor M-san didn't know the name of this character, I also spent a lot of effort to find it, the person who managed to get the rank was actually this

much unknown!

Just by looking at the name everyone will know who he is, right?

Then, the results of the vote.

The person in this voting ranking competition for the characters who managed to get onto the prized first place!

His name is—

Calawell Sara-san!!

“Ehhhhhh, is that me? Ah, that, that isn’t good? Isn’t good? That, I’m, I’m sorry.”

The person himself was trembling, but I believe that there only a handful of people who don’t know him. Then, who is he? First please take out “The Legend of the Legendary Heroes: Volume 7 Hardworking Time Limit”, inside he appeared under the name of Babell-sensei.

Yes, my explanation, I believe many people wouldn’t understand, but, someone unnoticeable like him did get the first place.

What world is this! (Laugh)

But, this is only the results for the middle part of the story, there is still time to send the voting cards. The voting results will be calculated again in “The Legend of the Legendary Heroes Anyway Volume 8”, so until then the rankings may have changed!

Now there is someone who sent an email to ask: “If I send out three hundred voting cards for Kiefer, will there be any changes in the ranking?!” , of course there will be a large change. Even if you didn’t send so many, there will be a large change.

Especially this time's popularity vote apart from voting for three people in the voting card, you can also give three votes to the same person, so there will be a large change immediately.

So, the people who are unsatisfied with this voting result please continue to vote! (Editor's note: this activity is only limited to Japan.)

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